

Suddenly, London fashion loses its sparkle as big designers look abroad

BY TAMM BLANCHARD
Fashion Editor

HYPE is always a dangerous thing, and nowhere more so than in the fashion business. No sooner has London Fashion Week established itself as a force to be reckoned with, than it seems the catwalks of Cool Britannia are cooling more rapidly than planned.

The leading British designer Alexander McQueen, who put London on the fashion map before being invited to head Givenchy, is considering quitting London's runways. "I'm thinking carefully about where I'm going to show next autumn. If I get bad vibes from the British Fashion Council, I'm just going to go. I've got too much at stake. The dollar and the yen just aren't coming here."

In February, McQueen, who holds the BFC responsible for failing to attract serious buyers to the capital, intends to give London one last chance. If the international press and buyers do not show up next time, he will take his fashion extravaganza to New York. "Unless they change the BFC, I will leave London. I've put so much money and energy into my work and that elevates London. But they still don't get the press and buyers here. Their job is to bring commerce into London and they're really pitiful."

When McQueen started out with his collection for spring/summer 94, his shows cost him £3,000 to produce. Now, he says, the price is closer to £330,000. For that amount of time and money, he expects to be rewarded with a whole bank of buyers. But instead, buyers attending his London shows fill a mere couple of rows. If he showed in New York, his sales would double.

Anna Wintour, the editor of *American Vogue*, does not consider the London shows important enough to be graced with her presence and, until she does, London will not be in the same league as the other fashion capitals. Another complaint is that there is not enough quality control on the schedule.



ANTONIO BERARDI

Antonio Berardi, 28, graduated from Central Saint Martin's in June 1994, the same year as Matthew Williamson. His graduation collection featured shoes by Manolo Blahnik and his own perfume. It sold to Liberty and A La Mode in Knightsbridge and he showed his first collection for spring/summer 95 with a little help from models Stella Tennant and Kylie Minogue. After his third collection, he won a manufacturing and distribution deal with Italian company Givusse. He has showrooms in Milan and Paris. His name has been on the shopping lists of fashion houses Givenchy, Celine, Iceberg and Versace. Berardi's clothes are known for innovative cutting.

Designers have been thrown into further disarray by the fact that the New York shows will take place earlier than usual, squeezing London off the schedule.

Rumours have been circulating that other key designers are thinking about leaving London's catwalks. The first expected to make the break is Antonio Berardi. Although he wants to keep London as his

creative base, he feels Milan is a more logical place for him to show. Like many British designers, Berardi has manufacturing backing in Italy where his collections are produced. Showing in London actually costs his backers. Givusse, more than if he were to show in Milan. Hussein Chalayan, meanwhile, is having to juggle the collection he designs for TSE New York with his own

label. If New York continues to show before London, he may have to move his own label elsewhere simply to have enough time between his two shows. The knitwear designer Julien Macdonald showed his collection in New York in October after he won sponsorship from Vidal Sassoon. If the arrangement continues, he will not be able to afford to show in London as well. Besides, 80 per



PHILIP TREACY

Philip Treacy, 31, the milliner from County Galway, was educated at the National College of Art and Design in Dublin, moving on to the Royal College of Art in 1988. While there he worked with Rifat Ozbek, John Galiano and Victor Edelstein, and opened his showroom in 1991. He has worked for and with Karl Lagerfeld at Chanel, Alexander McQueen, and at Givenchy; as well as creating his own runway shows for London fashion week. His hats are famously worn by Isabella Blow, and other well-known clients include Boy George and Honor Fraser. Five times winner of the British Accessory Designer of the Year, Treacy also designs for Debenhams.

cent of his business is in America. The milliner Philip Treacy plans to show in New York this spring, but he will show in London as well.

London's reputation has been built on young designers who take risks to launch their careers. Yesterday, at the British Fashion Council in London, the next batch of young designers to receive Marks & Spencer's New Generation

sponsorship were being chosen. There were about 70 applicants eager to become the next McQueen.

According to John Wilson, director of the BFC, there has been consistent growth in numbers of buyers attending London over the past four seasons. He claims buyers are flocking to the shows not just for McQueen, but to see the "critical mass of 40 to 50 designers" who



HUSSEIN CHALAYAN

Hussein Chalayan, who is in his late twenties, graduated from Central Saint Martin's in June 1993. His graduation collection was bought by Browns of South Molton Street and featured clothes made from envelope paper as well as pieces that had been buried and left to decompose in his back garden, with iron filings. Chalayan started to design for New York cashmere company TSE in spring and also designed a capsule collection for the high street giant Top Shop. He was nominated for British Fashion Designer of the Year last November. He is acknowledged internationally as one of today's most influential and interesting avant-garde designers.

have established themselves over the past four years.

British designers, although internationally famous, are still young, and do not have money to spend on advertising to lure the fashion press to their shows. "In terms of business, we are still tiny," says Inacio Ribeiro of Clements Ribeiro, one of our most commercially successful labels. While attendance at Lon-

don Fashion Week is better than it ever has been, if it began to decline, designers such as Clements Ribeiro would be forced to move. At the moment they are contemplating putting on a small-scale show in Milan.

"We don't want to show in any other place," says Ribeiro. "But if it was necessary, we would find the money from somewhere and go."

Protest in the cathedral 'political', says Tatchell

BY CLARE GARNER

THERE could be "no more appropriate time or place" to protest against the Archbishop of Canterbury's attitude to homosexuals than during his Easter Day sermon in Canterbury Cathedral, the gay rights activist Peter Tatchell told a court yesterday.

Wearing a bright purple shirt and a red ribbon for World Aids day, the Australian-born OutRage campaigner described how, after he took to the pulpit, he was "scratched and clawed" from behind as officers tried to remove him. A church steward hit his hands in an effort to prise his fingers off the microphone, and the congregation shouted "Get out, get out!", Canterbury Magistrates' Court was told.

Mr Tatchell, 46, stands accused of "indecent behaviour in a church" under an obscure ecclesiastical law last invoked more than 30 years ago. If found guilty, he could be fined £200 or face a maximum prison sentence of two months.

Mr Tatchell said he was "staggered" to be told of the existence of the law, which gives special protection to the church. Section two of the Ecclesiastical Court Jurisdiction Act 1860 - formerly part of the Bawling Act 1551 - outlaws any "riotous, violent or indecent behaviour" in any church building or burial ground.

The last person to be convicted under the provisions of this Act was Nicolas Walter, a former vice-president of the National Secular Society. He was jailed for two months in 1967 for shouting out "You hypocrites! How can you use the Word of God to justify your policies?" at a Methodist service during the Labour Party conference in Brighton. He was protesting against the Government's stance on Vietnam.

Mr Tatchell took to the witness box with bravado. He spoke loudly, sometimes raising his voice above that of the prosecution barrister. He smiled occasionally, such as when he recalled how he had sat quietly with his Bible to while away the minutes before he staged his protest. "I read the beautiful love poetry of the Song of Solomon," he said. But most of the time he was solemn, likening himself to a suffragette, and the Archbishop of Canterbury to the leaders of the Dutch Reformed Church during Apartheid.



The gay rights activist Peter Tatchell and supporters yesterday outside Canterbury Magistrates' Court where he is being tried on a charge of 'indecent behaviour in a church'

Earlier in the day, Mark Puntton, the verger responsible for escorting the Archbishop of Canterbury to the pulpit for the Easter Day sermon, described how he was duped into making way for Mr Tatchell and his six fellow OutRage protesters. During the sermon, Mr Puntton stood at the bottom of the pulpit steps to fulfil a role that was once protective but is now usually ceremonial. He told the court how a man had pretended

to have an asthma attack to divert him.

Mr Puntton also told the court that the congregation was "quite disturbed" that the protest had happened on "what, for the Christian church, is one of the holiest days in the calendar". However, Mr Tatchell maintained that his "direct action" tactics had not been offensive. "I didn't abuse the Archbishop or insult the church," he said. "I didn't attack the Christian religion. I simply said that Dr (George) Carey supports discrimination of lesbian and gay people and detailed the various ways in which he opposes lesbian and gay human rights."

He insisted that he had not disrupted the "sacred" part of the service - such as the Eucharist or prayers - but had deliberately intervened during the "political" part of the service.

Since Dr Carey had elected to speak on the subject of Northern Ireland during his sermon, Mr Tatchell felt entirely justified in raising another political topic. "If he (Dr Carey) had been violating the rights of Jewish people or black people, I think people would have had a degree of outrage and anger at what he was doing."

The National Secular Society has collected more than 700 signatures - including those of Sir Ludovic Kennedy, Sir Ian McKellen, Alan Bennett and Vanessa Redgrave - to a petition calling for the repeal of the 1860 Act. If Mr Tatchell's protest had been in any other public place, he could only have been charged with a public order offence, which would be unlikely to result in a custodial sentence. The trial continues.

Leading article
Review, page 3.

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TV FROM THE HEART

Scientists say decision to ban T-bone steaks was political as tempers flare at inquiry into cover-up of disease

Government jumped gun on beef ban

MINISTER ministers had to ban the sale of beef on the bone before they received the scientific advice that made the ban justified, it was claimed yesterday.

The meeting last year between Jack Cunningham, who was then Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, and his advisers, the decision was to prepare the ground for banning beef on the bone as a political measure to reassure the public that everything possible was being done to protect the food chain.

The Government has always said that its ban on beef on the bone last December was based on the latest scientific advice from its independent Scientific Encephalopathy Advisory Committee (Seac). It appears that it had made its mind before it had received that advice.

A spokesman for the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food confirmed yesterday that there was an "anticipatory meeting" between Mr Cunningham and the then Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Sir Kenneth Calman, the former chief medical officer, and Sir John Pattison, chairman of Seac.

BY STEVE CONNOR
Science Editor

ningham, Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary, Sir Kenneth Calman, the former chief medical officer, and Sir John Pattison, chairman of Seac.

The meeting took place before Seac presented its advice to ministers suggesting that a beef-on-the-bone ban was just one of three possible options that the Government could adopt after new research on the risks of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) infecting cattle bones.

Seac's latest advice, published yesterday, said that the risks last year from beef bones was minute and was now even smaller, but it refused to recommend the lifting of the year-old ban on T-bone steaks, ox tail and ribbed beef.

Sir John said he would not be surprised if the Government decided to lift the ban on the sale of beef on the bone before too long but argued that the decision was for ministers to make "based on the science".

"It's now 12 months on and we see the continuing decline of the BSE epidemic," Sir John said. "The risk was very small last year and now it's about a half or a third less than it was last year, which is negligible compared to what it was in the 1980s."

Nick Brown, the Agriculture Minister, said yesterday: "Clearly the time is coming when we can lift the domestic ban on beef on the bone. I hope to have something to say reasonably soon."

Sir John said that there was a possibility of about "one or two" cattle infected with BSE entering the human food chain next year which would have developed symptoms of the disease within the first 12 months of life had they not been slaughtered first.

These one or two cattle - out of more than 2 million to be slaughtered next year for human consumption - carry the greatest risk of being infected with BSE in the bones but Sir John emphasised that the number is only an estimate.



The Smithfield Show, at Earls Court in London, where the trade is hoping to see a recovery in the market for British beef

David Rose

"It might also be zero. If it is not zero and if we need to worry about one or two cattle then what we were doing in the past has seeded a large number of cases of [the

human] disease," Sir John added.

At present there have been 32 cases of new variant CJD, the human form of BSE, and scientists have little idea about

the future course of the epidemic. Professor Peter Smith, a Seac member responsible for predicting the scale of the epidemic, said: "The next few years are going to be critical in

terms of assessing the risk to the human population."

Seac yesterday also recommended that human spleens used for making a medical diagnostic test should in future be

sourced from countries with no BSE. Sir John said it was important to minimise the risk of injecting material from a CJD patient into a large number of people.

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THE GIFT OF READING

Ex-minister denies abattoir negligence

BY CHARLES ARTHUR
Technology Editor

STEPHEN DORRELL clashed with the chairman of the BSE Inquiry yesterday, over the failure of Tory ministers to stress to abattoir staff the importance of rules banning BSE-infective tissues from food.

Mr Dorrell, the former secretary of state for health, said that obeying regulations was the abattoirs' statutory job, and that "I am not sure what more ministers can do."

But the inquiry panel pointed out that ministers and abattoirs each seemed to assume that the claims of the other guaranteed their own actions and statements - particularly ministers' repeated claims that beef was "safe to eat".

Mr Dorrell told the inquiry in south London that ministers had assumed that abattoirs were obeying the 1989 "specified offals ban" to remove tissues such as spinal cord from cattle carcasses: "My understanding that beef was safe had two foundations," he noted in a statement before the hearing. "The first... was that BSE



Dorrell: Denied failure

was most unlikely to be transmissible to humans. The second was that even if it was... the Government had already introduced the specified offals ban."

But Judge Sir Nicholas Phillips pointed out to Mr Dorrell that "as time went by, those who knew about the subject attached increasing importance to these regulations, because evidence raised question marks over the thesis that [BSE] is not transmissible [to humans]".

But, he said, no evidence from the industry or ministers had suggested any point where

slaughterhouses were told that the risk of transmissibility might be higher, and that it was crucial that infected parts were removed.

June Bridgeman, another of the three-strong inquiry panel, told Mr Dorrell that other witnesses had said they regarded the abattoir regulations as "a mere precaution" because ministers had been assuring people that beef was safe to eat. Mr Dorrell replied: "The only basis which I felt free to say beef is safe is on the basis that these safeguards were in place and being enforced. Clearly if the safeguards were not being enforced, we could not have felt that beef was in the normal meaning of the word safe."

He added: "These were people under a statutory obligation to perform a duty and under those circumstances I am not sure what more ministers can do."

He said that in November 1995, where 17 cases where spinal cord had been found attached to the carcass after dressing, was "potentially serious".

Student loses pool pay-out

A STUDENT condemned to life in a wheelchair after diving into a college swimming pool was told by a court yesterday that he was not entitled to damages.

In the ruling, the Court of Appeal judges warned of the dangers of "high-spirited" young men taking risks with their own safety.

Luke Ratcliff, now 23, of Cambridge, was left paralysed

with complete tetraplegia after hitting his head on the bottom of the open air swimming pool at the Harper Adams Agricultural College, in Shropshire, in December 1994. He had dived in with two friends after a disco.

An appeal by the college against a High Court ruling that the student was entitled to damages was allowed. The college authorities had denied liability arguing that Mr Ratcliff

had shown complete disregard for his own safety.

Tyrene Athia-Davies, 12, accepted a £725,000 settlement at the High Court in London after he was left with double vision and loss of memory after a piano fell on him at the Clapham Baptist Church, in south-west London, in 1995. The blow fractured his skull. The deans and trustees of the church admitted liability.

IN BRIEF

Venables in clear on transfers

DETECTIVES EXAMINING the transfers of four Australian players to Portsmouth FC when it was under the control of Terry Venables, the former England coach, said yesterday they had found no evidence of "dishonesty or corruption". Although they are continuing to investigate allegations of "bad business practice" at the club, they have given the transfers a clean bill of health.

Judge seeks air pest crackdown

JUDGE Anthony Enns called for tougher jail sentences for drunken airline passengers after hearing how two stewardesses were indecently assaulted on a holiday flight to Thailand. Peter Heys, 34, from Stockport, was jailed for 18 months after pleading guilty at Manchester Crown Court to drunkenness and indecent assault.

Heart surgeon loses appeal

THE HEART SURGEON Janardan Dhasmana has lost his appeal against dismissal from Bristol Royal Infirmary. Mr Dhasmana, 59, was one of three doctors found guilty of serious professional misconduct in the Bristol heart children's scandal.

MS campaign targets patchy care

MPS FROM all parties backed a campaign to set national standards of care for multiple sclerosis sufferers. A survey by the MS Society found care to be patchy with nearly half of NHS trusts not offering specialised treatment.

A Christmas Message

Christmas is a time for counting our blessings. Without the generosity of so many good friends, we could not continue to provide the love, care and comfort for our patients and their families. We wish you all a blessed Christmas, and look forward to your continued support.

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British society changes overnight as bureaucrats re-classify us all

BY PAUL VALLEY

EVERY ONE being British – or at least able to exercise that quintessentially British quality of restraint – no one actually mentioned the eldest son of Princess Margaret by name. But the Viscount Linley question hung in the air at the launch of the Government's new definitions of class yesterday.

The big question, of course, was in who's up and who's down. (Teachers, bank managers, police and prison officers have risen, while shop assistants, hairdressers and plasterers have fallen in the socio-economic league tables.) But that is not the most interesting bit.

Given the exponential changes in the British economy since the official categories were drawn up for the 1911 census, some such changes in the pecking order of individual jobs was inevitable. But, though there have been several such modifications in official categories since then, the essential demarcation of the population into classes which Marx would happily have embraced – professional and plebeian, white-collar and manual, skilled and unskilled – has remained unchanged. Until now.

Yesterday, the National Statistics Office unveiled an entirely revised set of socio-economic classifications. The new gradings reveal the rise and rise of the middle class who make up 60 per cent of the population now (compared with 51 per cent in 1984). They also reflect the shift from manufacturing to services: the cleaner has replaced the coal miner as the archetypal manual worker; shop assistants now constitute the largest single occupation group (about 3 per cent of the population) and a staggering 1 per cent of the workforce are now employed in telephone call centres.

The new categories also take account of the increased role in the workplace of women, who today occupy 18 per cent of all professional posts (compared with 4 per cent in 1984) and have only now been categorised for the first time in their own right rather than according to



HOW YOU NOW RANK ON THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC SCALE

OLD CLASS	NEW CLASS
1 Professional	1 Higher managerial and professional occupations
2 Managerial and technical	2 Lower managerial and professional occupations
3 Skilled (non-manual)	3 Intermediate occupations
4 Skilled (manual)	4 Small employers and own account workers
5 Partly-skilled	5 Lower supervisory, craft and related occupations
6 Unskilled	6 Semi-routine occupations
7 Routine occupations	7 Routine occupations

The six socio-economic classes – according to the system drawn up by the Registrar General for the 1911 Census

The new classes according to the system drawn up by the Office for National Statistics and Economic and Social Research Council for the 2001 census

WHO'S UP

Previously 'technical' or 'associate professional' now 'professional':
Teachers, airline pilots, social workers, librarians, personnel officers, computer analysts

Previously 'technical', now 'higher managerial':
Bank managers, company directors, financial managers, senior local government officers

Previously 'skilled', now 'associate professional':
Police officers, fire-fighters, prison officers

Previously 'skilled manual', now 'intermediate':
Computer engineers, dental technicians, precision instrument makers

WHO'S DOWN

Previously 'skilled non-manual' now 'semi routine':
Shop assistants, garage forecourt attendants, supermarket check-out operators

Previously 'skilled manual' now 'semi routine':
Drivers, hairdressers, bricklayers, plasterers, welders, cooks

STAYING THE SAME

Class 1 – higher professionals:
Doctors, lawyers, dentists, higher civil servants, academics, engineers

Class 2 – associate professionals and lower managers:
Nurses, physiotherapists, journalists, actors and musicians

Class 3 – intermediate occupations:
Secretaries/PAs, airline flight attendants, driving instructors, computer operators, clerical workers

Class 5 – craft and related workers:
Electricians, tv engineers, car mechanics, train drivers, printers

Class 7 – routine occupations:
Car park attendants, cleaners, road workers, refuse collectors, labourers, road sweepers

their husband's job. The new class system also includes a new rank – the self-employed individual or small firm owner.

Which is where Viscount Linley comes in. He may be 12th in line to the throne but because his job is that of cabinet-maker he is now down there in class 5 with all the other 'lower supervisory, craft and related occupations'. Unless, that is, his firm employs anyone else, in which case he moves up just one step to class 4.

Professor David Rose, the Essex University sociologist who led the team which drew up the system, sighed wearily

at this point. Cabinet-makers are generally not members of the aristocracy, he declared, but the sons of working class fathers. "We surveyed 65,000 people across 371 occupations to create the new tables. Do you believe them or some anecdotal exception, he said. "Socio-economic class has nothing to do with social standing."

You could have fooled the rest of us, Class in Britain may be less hidebound than of yore but it is still tangled up in a complex nexus of prejudice and experience. It is not simply socio-economic but is rather about how cultures accrete

through the generations. It is bound up, too, with self-perception, with the groups we belong to, the clubs we join and even the religions we embrace. Class is at once, when we are feeling traditional, about hierarchy and stability and, when we come over political, about conflict and change.

It is wider too than the marketing classifications which see the individual as co-terminus with spending power in their A. B. C. D. E. lexicon. And yet the nature of our employment has a greater impact upon the chances we have in life than almost anything else, which is

why occupation remains at the heart of the new system.

But there is a subtle shift. It is not based on earnings. (On average someone in the new class one earns only 2.3 times more than someone in class seven.) Rather it is concerned with employment conditions like job security, salary increments, sick pay, non-financial perks and the amount of control the individual has over their workload. It is because of deteriorations in these criteria, compared with those of other jobs previously categorised as non-manual social class III, that check-out operators and

sales assistants have found themselves sliding down the slippery socio-economic pole.

In any case the purpose of the official categories is not social but to assist governments in working out how to counter blackspots in health, education, crime and so forth, so that resources may be better targeted. It is still the case that men in the lowest category, class 7, are three and a half times more likely to die from a stroke than men in class 1 – they were also twice as likely to die from cancer, five and a half times from an accident and four and a half times more likely to commit suicide.

No statistics – on health or otherwise – are provided for those in the "never worked" and "long-term unemployed" category.

Professor Rose's report wanted to place them in a class of their own. But the Government has decided against a class eight. The argument was that it would be too difficult to find a definition which would describe them all circumstances. It might, of course, also draw increased attention to those who, whatever they are called, are still at the bottom of the heap – and to the problem, not of what to call them, but what to do about them.

London HIV births double

BY GLENDA COOPER
Social Affairs Correspondent

MIDWIVES ARE to spearhead campaign to tackle the growing number of babies being given the HIV virus by their mothers.

The frequency of HIV-positive women giving birth "risks significantly" since beginning of the decade.

But because more than per cent of mothers who HIV positive do not know they are infected, their unborn babies are left at greater risk of catching the virus. Positive women who take the test at time can drastically cut their risk of HIV passing to their babies from one in six to one in 10.

Now midwives will assist a government campaign launched yesterday to encourage more mothers-to-be to take the test. The number of babies born to HIV-infected women is no 1 in 500 in London generally and 1 in 600 in the rest of the country, says the Department of Health. For inner London the figure is now one in 369.

Yet most women do not realise they have the virus until their baby becomes ill. Only 4 per cent had the test during pregnancy and 35 per cent after their child was born and appeared ill. More than 50 per cent only had the test when their child developed AIDS.

If a mother knows she is HIV positive when she is pregnant she can be given drug treatments, opt for a Caesarean and refrain from breastfeeding – all of which reduce the chance of the infection being passed on.

Last year, 250 babies were born to HIV infected mothers. This is estimated to have led to about 40 infections in babies in London alone.

The high levels of HIV infections in pregnant women in the capital reflects the substantial population of men and women from Africa. Available data suggests that around 80 per cent of HIV infections are in women born in sub-Saharan Africa.

"Having the courage to opt for an HIV test is an important first step in preventing babies being born with HIV," said the health minister, Tessa Jowell.

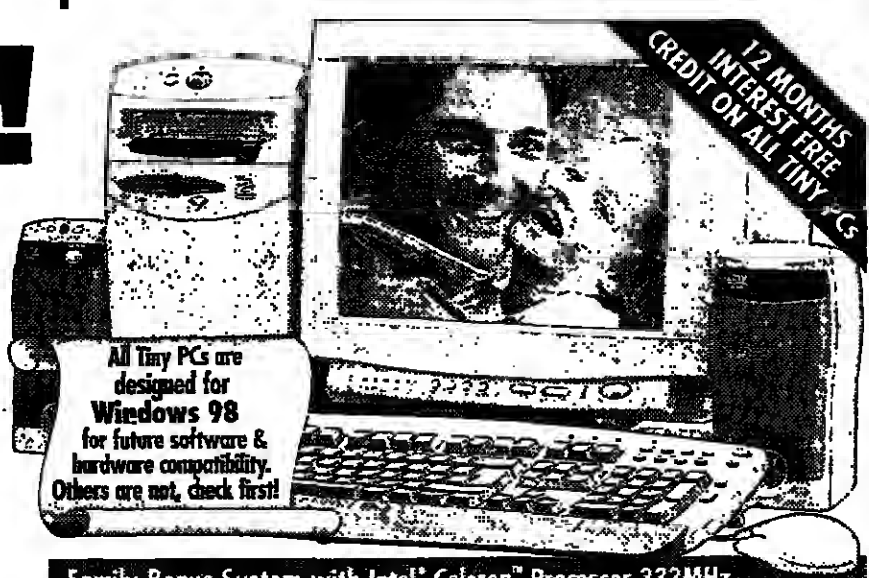
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Dobson gives warning over council homes

NATIONAL STANDARDS and to inspection processes will be introduced to protect vulnerable children and old people by social services, government announced yesterday.

Jack Leppend watchdogs in the region will regulate care services and the Secretary of State for Health will have the power to step in if care is not properly delivered.

As a warning the White Paper on *Improving Social Services*, the Health Secretary Frank Dobson said that at present in many services across the board, neither it is care in people's homes, residential care or fostering.

Inspectors will have the power to go in without warning to check on standards of accommodation, food and hygiene. They will also be able to take down homes which fail to meet up to scratch.

New national standards of performance will be laid down by ministers, and councils will be required to publish annual reports on what they have achieved.

"It matters to us all that good social services are available," Dobson said. "And it goes further than that. Any decent society must provide for those who need support and are unable to look after themselves. It is a benefit if these services are provided for those who need them."

The standards will also include guidance on what councils should charge for services such as home helps - one report found some people paid only 4 per cent of a council's spending on the service, while others in other areas paid 28 per

BY GLENDA COOPER
Social Affairs Correspondent

THE KEY POINTS

- Direct payments will be extended to those over 65, giving people more control over how their needs are met.
- There will be a tough new inspection regime for children's homes and a better register of people unsuitable to work with children.
- Children in care can expect "radical improvements" in education opportunities and better health services, with more help as they reach adulthood.
- Eight regional Commissioners for Care Standards will regulate care services, including small children's homes and council-run homes.
- A General Social Care Council will set standards for staff and there will be a new national training strategy.

cent - and inspection arrangements would be reformed.

Children's rights officers in every region will inspect children's homes and ensure that allegations of harm or abuse are properly investigated. They will report directly to the Chief Inspector of Social Services, any significant evidence that children are not being properly safeguarded. But children's charities were disappointed that the Government did not go further and set up a national children's commissioner.

"A national children's commissioner would come to the rescue of children wherever and whenever their rights are trampled on," said the NSPCC director, Jim Harding. "He or

she would fight on behalf of children against a range of problems... and would ensure that children are put at the heart of Government thinking."

A General Social Care Council will regulate training of the one million workers in social care. At present 80 per cent of this workforce have no recognised qualifications or training.

Mr Dobson said the Government was making nearly £3m extra available for social services in the next three years and announced £750m was being earmarked to pay for the changes. An additional £185m would be invested in mental health services provided by social services.

"The new arrangements should make sure that anyone receiving social services help, whether young or old, whether living at home or in residential accommodation, is protected from neglect, abuse or exploitation," said Mr Dobson.

Chris Davies, president of the Association of Directors of Social Services, welcomed the announcements but stressed that the developments called for "a sustained commitment of attention and money" to succeed.

And the National Schizophrenia Fellowship (NSF) warned that new services were needed. "Homes have been inspected in the past and fallen well short of local standards but stayed open because authorities have not been able to find alternative accommodation," said Cliff Prior, the NSF's chief executive.

Sally Greengross, director-general of Age Concern England said the charity was "disappointed" that the government was not ensuring all those who provide services in older people's own homes are registered. "Older people should be able to know what they can expect, when they will receive it, and that people who are coming into their homes are qualified and reliable."



Patrons in the Alphabet Bar, in Soho, watching the preparation of absinthe with sugar and water. Nicola Kurtz

After 70 years, the toast of Bohemia returns to Britain

BY DARIUS SANAI

THE ALPHABET BAR in Soho, London, was yesterday witness to the first official tasting of absinthe in Britain since the 1920s. Once the inspirational liquor of the artistic and literary masses of the 19th century, the glowing green herbal-aniseed liquid is poised for a revival as the drink of the *fin de millénaire*.

Toulouse Lautrec drank absinthe from a hollow walking stick. Manet and Degas both painted absinthe drinkers in advanced states of intoxication. Other drinkers included Picasso, Zola, Rimbaud and Baudelaire.

Absinthe last laced the brains of Europe's Bohemian masses just after the First World War until it was banned by the authorities across Europe for causing insanity. At the

turn of the century, 50 per cent of the inhabitants of French asylums were there because of the effects of absinthe.

The authorities had a point. At 70 per cent alcohol, (140 degrees proof), absinthe would serve as an excellent oven-cleaner, with the additional advantage of containing tautogone, a narcotic similar to cannabis. Taken with sugar, a splash of water and ice, absinthe tastes slightly minty, has a powerful kick and is liable to make you mistake your fellow drinkers for your best friends.

Originally made from wormwood - a herbal remedy derived from bark - and pure alcohol and herbs, after the ban absinthe soon sank into obscurity, being served only in the artistic quarters of Prague and Barcelona.



Lautrec: Drank absinthe from hollow walking stick

Green Bohemia, a company formed by four young Londoners, has started importing the

liquid from the Czech Republic, where it is distilled, and supplying it, in limited quantities, at £40 a bottle to London's most fashionable bars.

The Groucho Club, the Met Bar, Detroit and Alphabet will be serving the drink in cocktails over the Christmas season. If the reaction of the beau monde in the Alphabet was anything to go by, it will go down very well indeed.

"I'm very impressed," said Tony Robinson, 66, who last tried absinthe in a bar in Paris in the 1960s. "It's full of character, like an artists' palette."

Louise Kaweck was a fount of knowledge about absinthe and its effects on Van Gogh. "He had a fight with Gauguin and cut off his ear," she said, and took another sip.

British soldiers escape life term

THREE FORMER British soldiers jailed for killing a Danish tourist guide in Cyprus had their appeal against life sentences upheld yesterday.

The men, who were all members of the First Battalion Royal Green Jackets at the time of the offence, will now serve a maximum 25 years.

Justin Fowler, 39, from Falmouth, Cornwall, Alan Ford, 30, from Birmingham and Geoff Parnell, 27, from Oldbury, West Midlands, were jailed for life without remission in March 1996 for the abduction and manslaughter of Louise Jensen four years ago.

But although they had the life sentence reduced, the Cyprus Supreme Court still imposed a stiffer sentence for manslaughter than the average 15 years. "Their merciless behaviour ranked the crime which they committed with the highest degree of seriousness of manslaughter and the sentence must reflect this," said the judge, George Pikiis.

Legal sources said the three were most likely to serve 15 years, taking into account good behaviour and routine presidential pardons.

The sentence counts from the time the soldiers were arrested in September 1994.

Judge Pikiis said the three could not be held indefinitely as their young age and clean criminal record at the time of the offence were mitigating factors. Their drunken state was also taken into account by the Supreme Court, which said it was a mistake for the criminal court not to consider the influence of alcohol when passing a life sentence.

Louise's parents were present for the court ruling and expressed their disappointment afterwards.

"I thought they should be kept in prison for life. I am very disappointed," said Louise's mother, Annette.

Miss Jensen, 23, was sexually assaulted and brutally beaten to death with a spade after being abducted near a petrol station in Ayia Napa on 13 September 1994. Her naked body was found two days later in a shallow grave.

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HER FIRST
WORDS

YOU MISSED
HER FIRST
STEPS

YOU MISSED
HER FIRST
PARTY

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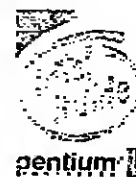
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A star is born, and begins to shine

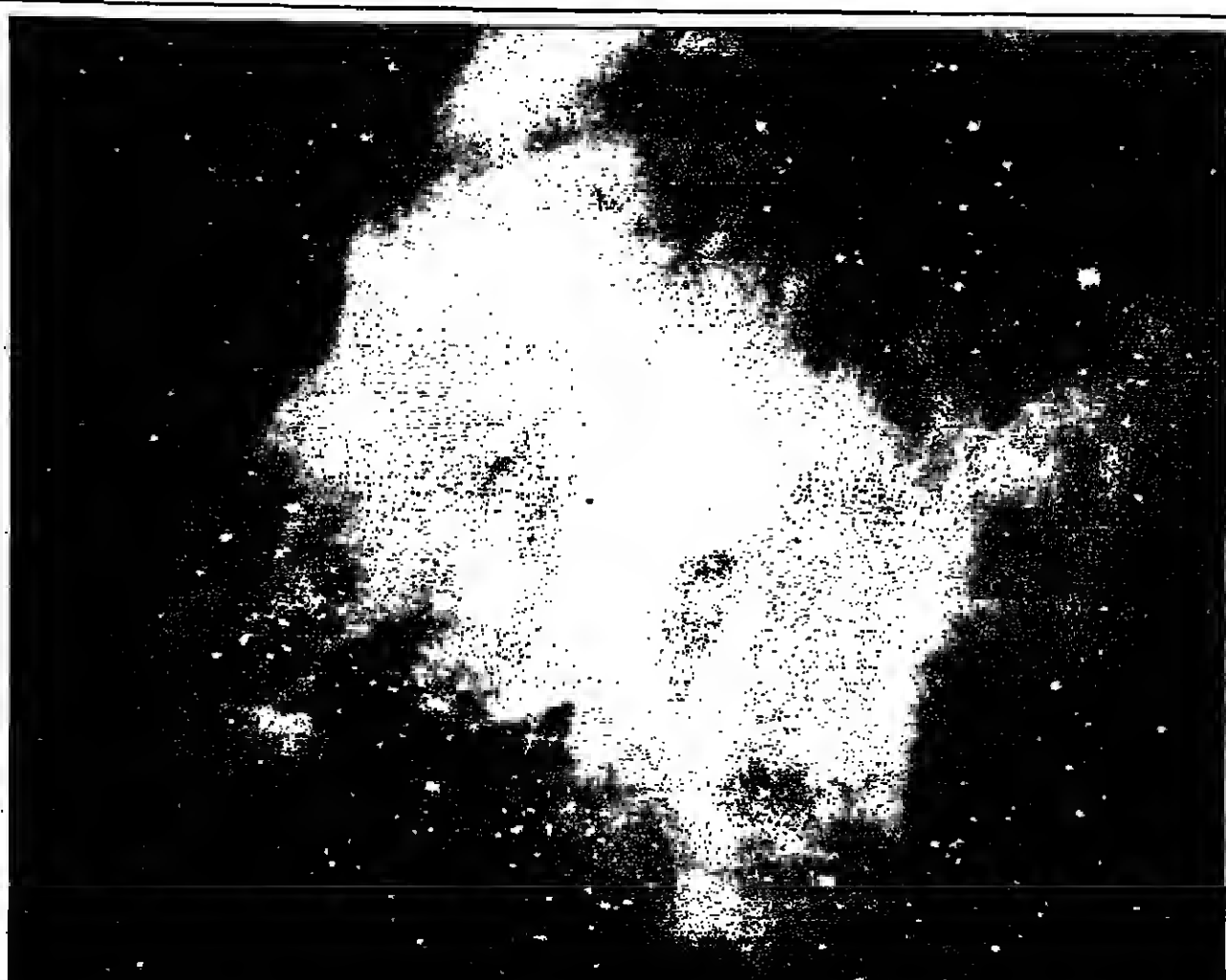
BY CHARLES ARTHUR
Technology Editor

THIS IS a part of our galaxy where stars which have just been born are beginning to shine, as the Sun once did on the orbiting rocks that coalesced into the Earth.

Though the region where the stars are forming, called RCW58, lies only 5,000 light years from us - and that is almost in the same street, cosmically speaking - this light cannot be seen with the naked eye because the stars are heavily obscured by clouds of gas and dust.

Instead, the picture by the European Southern Observatory in Punta Arenas, Chile, was captured by photographs taken at the infra-red part of the spectrum.

At these wavelengths, the light is not absorbed so much by the dust between the Earth and the new stars.



New stars seen clearly in a photo taken at the infra-red part of the spectrum European Space Observatory

BBC banks on Monet and the millennium

BBC1 MADE a claim for the moral high ground yesterday with a £125m winter schedule designed to prove that populism and preaching can mix.

In a spirited reproof to ITV bosses for moving *News at Ten*, the BBC1 controller, Peter Salmon, announced his determination to retain everything from soaps to science on the corporation's main channel.

The ratings wars will be fought by what he termed the BBC's "home-grown" stars of Nick Berry, Michelle Collins and Michael French - who became household names with *EastEnders* - in a portfolio of contemporary dramas.

But he cited a new self-help campaign, *Fighting Fat, Fighting Fit*, aimed at getting the UK back into shape, as evidence of what the BBC should be all about. "This is the BBC using a unique range of resources and networks to inspire Britain to a healthier future," he said.

Among highlights announced yesterday were a

BY LOUISE JURY

short series of films and a special *Omnibus* programme on the artist Monet. "I haven't seen ITV's winter schedule, but I don't suppose there's a lot of time given to Impressionist painters," Mr Salmon said.

And he went on to trail a range of programmes including *Reverend*, a millennium project in which children tell the stories of the century, and *Supernatural*, a new series from the BBC's Natural History Unit.

He contrasted the approach with that of ITV where, he said, moving *News at Ten* to 6.30pm was a "pretty good symbol" of the difference between the two networks. It was the BBC's "responsibility to preserve diversity at peak times," he said. "If you look at our mix, our mix is miles more diverse. We do science and religion every week at peak times. They don't do anything like that."

The "mix" includes an off-

shoot of the Saturday *Casualty*, to be called *City*, and *Bravo Two Zee* account based on McNab's book on the SAS, ring Sean Bean.

Martin Kemp, the 40 Spandau Ballet pop star, the cast of *EastEnders* in a classic costume drama, Richard E Grant portray Scarier Pimpernel.

The children's consu programme, *Short Ch* moves to BBC1 from E and Caroline Aherne is to in her own new sitcom.

At the launch of the w season of programmes yesterday, Berry, star of ITV's *He beat*, said he was going "to where I began", rejoining BBC for two years to develop range of programmes. He recently been filming *Harb Lights*, a drama based o harbourmaster.

"You don't have to sell wa ing machines with the BBC," said, conceding that he i also made enough money n to do what he wanted.

Cabinet will back unions on rights

THE GOVERNMENT has rejected employers' proposals to water down a key element of its plans for workers' rights, *The Independent* has learnt.

Much to the frustration of the Downing Street Policy Unit, ministers have acceded to the wishes of unions and will refuse to undermine the controversial proposals for automatic union recognition where a majority of employees are in membership. Originally the Confederation of British Industry and the Prime Minister's policy advisors argued that workers should count towards recognition only if they had been members for at least 12 months.

In private negotiations, the "delaying period" was cut to six months, then three months and has now been dropped.

After his concession to unions, however, Peter Mandelson, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, is furious that they are now opposing his plan to issue detailed guidelines to the Central Arbitration Committee, to enable it to assess unions claims for automatic bargaining rights. Mr Mandelson has told unions that the committee must have clear ground rules for assessing whether someone is a bona fide member of a union.

Unions fear that the cabinet minister is attempting another "wheeze" to make automatic recognition difficult. "If it is a genuine attempt to solve arguments over recognition by the simplest and clearest means, we support it."

"If it envelops the whole thing in red tape which will take more than three months to disentangle, then we are opposed to it," one senior union official said.

A Whitehall source, however, said: "The TUC is trying to

BY BARBIE CLEMENT
Labour Editor

have its cake and eat it. It won't accept anything that might fetter its God-given right to automatic recognition. All the Government wants is for applications to be subject to reasonable scrutiny by the CAC."

The row has prevented the Government finalising its Fairness at Work Bill, which is now unlikely to be published until the new year.

The decision to turn down some form of delaying mechanism, however, is a clear victory for union leaders. They argued that the constant turnover of labour, and the possibility that management might "lean" on employees to quit unions, meant that a time lapse would severely undermine the law's effectiveness.

Ken Jackson, the right-wing leader of the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union, and the nearest thing to a Prime Ministerial ally in the union movement, threatened retaliatory action if the CBI's demands were met. Mr Jackson warned that his union would be far more selective about its financial backing for Labour candidates in a whole range of elections.

Employers, however, have succeeded in amending another critical element of the Fairness at Work White Paper published earlier this year. While the document envisaged removing the upper limit on compensation for unfair dismissal, ministers have accepted the representations of employers and will increase the cap from the present £12,000 to £40,000 or £50,000. Employers suggested that the removal of the cap would lead to an explosion of litigation.

Air traffic centre hits more delays

AN INDEPENDENT report has criticised the managers of the planned £475m air traffic control centre at Swanwick, Dorset, and warned that the project, already six years late, could fall even further behind schedule.

The report, commissioned by the Government, found management methods used by National Air Traffic Services (Nats), a subsidiary of the state-owned Civil Aviation Authority, were "a long way from best procurement practice". It also found Nats' initial target opening date of 1996 centre was "totally unrealistic".

The CAA admitted mistakes had been made but said the report showed Swanwick was now "on track" and the air traffic control was a safe oper-

BY PHILIP THORNTON
Transport Correspondent

ation. Nats has encountered a series of problems with the computer software and is now likely to open in the winter of 2001-2002.

In its report, the Defence Evaluation and Research Agency (Dera) recommended measures to strengthen the management and warned that if they were not implemented, there was "a strong possibility that further slippage, into at least 2002, will occur".

Dera warned that air traffic delays "can be expected to increase" shortly before and after the centre becomes operational but added that there was no reason why safety standards should be compromised.

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Every little helps

Speaker keeps straining MPs on tight leash over Pinochet

SEVERAL OF my right honourable members have told me that I was urageous to put this question on," said Tony McWalter, the Labour/Co-operative MP for Hemel Hempstead, rounding off an inquiry about Freemasons in the police. "Did the Home Secretary understand," he said, "that such creative groups were 'capable of depicting real fear'?"

Mr McWalter had his back to the all as he made his point: if masked men were to attempt to seize him and bury him up to his neck at low tide he knew, at least, that they wouldn't come from behind. Maybe he now hopes that Mr Straw will as-

sign a Special Branch team to protect him from the Masonic fatwa that must already have been issued, but other MPs didn't look greatly impressed by his selfless act of bravery. They knew that there is something far more unnerving than disgruntled Freemasons and far more effective at stilling loose tongues in case of reprisals.

Last week Madam Speaker made known her displeasure at repeated attempts by members to raise the matter of General Pinochet's arrest and possible extradition. So yesterday, despite the tantalising presence of the Home Secretary, and despite several

promising questions on the order paper, there was not a peep about him during oral questions.

Even Eric Forth, the Conservative MP for Bromley and Chislehurst, and David Winnick, the Labour MP for Walsall North, managed to ask questions without mentioning his name. It was an act of self-restraint which called to mind the heroic obedience of a dog required to balance a meaty treat on its nose, until its owner gives the word of permission for it to toss it in the air and gobble it down. They knew, as everyone else did, that the Speaker has the power to vocally neuter a wayward canine.

THE SKETCH



THOMAS SUTCLIFFE

But, later, in a far more impressive display of nerve than that demonstrated by Mr McWalter, Ed-

ward Leigh, the Conservative MP for Gainsborough, raised a point of order about the Speaker's ruling. He quoted Hansard, he quoted Erskine May, and the more he did so the more Madam Speaker tugged irritably at his choke-chain. "This is getting rather tedious," she said crossly.

Mr Leigh's winning became a little more strangled as his collar tightened but it did not cease altogether. Since the columns of every newspaper in the land were filled with discussion of the General's future, and since MPs and ministers were able to comment freely outside the Chamber, could the Speaker

confirm that "we alone are not allowed to discuss this issue?"

Yes, the Speaker could confirm it.

MPs, used to the idea that they have more privileges than the man in the street, looked rather crestfallen, as only harshly disciplined dogs can. To show that she meant business Miss Boothroyd later rapped Sir Norman Fowler, the Conservative MP for Sutton Coldfield, over the nose with a rolled-up copy of Hansard when he too began to drift towards that irresistible lamppost.

In the House of Lords, Melvyn Bragg was making his maiden

speech, and conjured up a vision more alarming than marauding Freemasons or a disgruntled Speaker. Every year, apparently, 30,000 media students graduate from universities and colleges. This is an appalling statistic and for a moment it seemed as if Lord Bragg might propose some way to stem the senseless waste of young lives.

But, on the contrary, he wanted to find them jobs - creating programmes for a new cable channel, funded by existing broadcasters as a bhothouse for young British media talent. Who will actually watch all this stuff he didn't say, but perhaps that's for another day.

Straw pledge to reform 'absurd' Lords

THE BITTER feud over plans to scrap hereditary peers' voting rights broke out once again yesterday as Jack Straw spoke of them as an "absurd and offensive" principle.

Pledging the Government's determination to press ahead with Lords' reform, the Home Secretary warned Conservatives they would be defeating the will of the electorate if they voted against the legislation.

"The principle of hereditary peers is seen to be completely preposterous, risible, the moment it is applied in any other walk of life... imagine as you are lying mouth open in the dentist's chair and questions are raised in your mind about the dentist's skills as he drills into your gum and not your teeth."

"You ask to see his certificate of competence. He produces one, awarded in 1860 to his great-great-uncle William," Mr Straw said, opening resumed debate on the Queen's Speech.

The second fundamental objection to their position was that they gave an in-built three-to-one majority to the Tories in the Lords.

Mr Straw went on to stress that the two-stage process of reform was outlined in the Labour Party manifesto and under the Salisbury Convention peers should not oppose any proposals which were endorsed by the electorate.

He warned: "Yet we are now told that this doctrine, and our manifesto, are both to be ignored. It is undemocratic, unconstitutional, and not a position which will impress the British people."

HEREDITARY PEERS
By SARAH SCHAEFER
Political Reporter

While the Government believed that a second chamber should play "a most important role", there was "the world of difference between someone appointed to a position on their own merit, and someone appointed to a position on the merits of their forebears," the Home Secretary added.



Fowler: 'Disaster'

But Sir Norman Fowler, the shadow home secretary, accused the Government of wanting to create a "giant ermine-clad quango" with "appointees and placemen".

"The sensible thing would be for the Government to set out their proposals and then legislate. But that would put them in deep difficulty since they have no idea what comes next... their legislation on House of Lords reform is a constitutional disaster that should be rejected."

Sir Norman, who has led Tory attacks in the Commons

against the "closed list" system proposed by ministers for next year's Euro-elections, went on to renew his parties' opposition to the legislation.

The European Parliamentary Elections Bill will be reintroduced and rushed through the Commons this week after being defeated five times by peers.

Sir Norman said that in the Lords too, the Government was planning a form of closed list and would be "scaling highways and motorways" for suitable candidates to appoint as life peers in the Lords.

"Now we know what the former Welsh Secretary Ron Davies was really doing that night on Clapham Common... he was on a recruitment drive," he joked.

Kenneth Clarke, the former chancellor of the exchequer, condemned the Government for devoting so much time to the abolition of hereditary peers' voting rights thousands of jobs were threatened.

"But this piece of legislation is designed to keep dissident backbenchers happy. It is being introduced for short-term party management reasons while more serious issues of constitutional reform are being neglected," Mr Clarke said.

While he was in favour of abolishing the voting rights of hereditaries, he never thought that any Government would be so "daff" to implement stage one without asking MPs to consider other aspects of the second chamber, he added.

David Aaronovitch
Review, page 3



Frank Dobson, the Secretary of State for Health, driving a JCB yesterday at a new development for Farnborough hospital, Kent. Tim Jones

£4m grant for homeless shelters

AS SCHEME worth £4m to cut the number of homeless people sleeping rough this winter was unveiled by the Government yesterday.

The Housing minister, Hilary Armstrong, announced that the "winter shelter programme" would help voluntary groups to provide more than 500 beds nationwide.

The cash package, which will centre on London, Bristol, Cambridge and Brighton, will offer emergency hostel spaces

WINTER HARDSHIP
By PAUL WAUGH
Political Correspondent

as well as advice on drugs, alcohol and mental illness during the coldest months.

The new money was a crucial part of the Government's drive to reduce the number of people sleeping on the streets by two-thirds by 2002. Ms Armstrong said. More than £34m will be spent over the next three years on grants to charities

and other voluntary groups in an attempt to meet the target.

The number of people sleeping on the streets in London still averages about 390 a night and charities warn that many are at risk if they remain unhoused at sub-zero temperatures.

A £200,000 Department of Health programme will also offer specialist help for those sleeping rough who have mental health problems.

Admiralty Arch, across The

Mall in central London, which housed homeless people last winter after a high-profile launch by the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, will not be used in the programme, but other government buildings will.

Ms Armstrong said the scheme would offer vital emergency help to those who slept rough at a time of year when they were most vulnerable.

"People should not need to sleep on the streets in this country," she said. "Working

with voluntary organisations, we can offer not only shelter but the opportunity of a fresh start, with help to find permanent accommodation."

"Our commitment is absolute. The number of people sleeping rough must be cut by two-thirds by 2002."

The new £34m programme is part of Labour's alternative to the rough sleepers' initiative, launched by the last Tory government, which spent £250m on hostel beds over seven years.

Call for clean up of immigration 'rackets'

ASYLUM SEEKERS
By SARAH SCHAEFER

MINISTERS PLEDGED their commitment to crack down on "unsavoury" immigration advisers yesterday, urging MPs to "be very clear" about the advice they gave to constituents about them.

Immigration minister Michael O'Brien condemned the "corrupt and incompetent" conduct of advisers who were "making passports available to people as they walked through the door", adding that the Government would introduce regulation shortly.

He stressed during question time that the forthcoming Immigration and Asylum Bill aimed to speed up decisions on claims for political asylum and to deter economic refugees from seeking to enter Britain.

Mr O'Brien said that, 584 foreigners seeking entry into the United Kingdom had been



O'Brien: Warning to MPs

picked up at ports and airports by the Immigration Service in fraudulent possession of British passports between 1 October 1997, and 30 September 1998.

He insisted there would be no amnesty for people who had been refused asylum and challenged the Tories: "You left tens of thousands of asylum seekers - some of them genuine - in a backlog for six, seven,

eight to ten years without a decision in their cases."

David Winnick, Labour MP for Walsall North, said many vulnerable asylum-seekers who had paid a high price for dubious advice from immigration advisers ended up in MPs' surgeries asking for help. "Isn't it about time that all this sort of racketeering... is cleaned up?" he demanded.

Mr O'Brien said the Government was committed to taking action "as soon as possible". "The whole way that these rackets have been run is a scandal... I would say to MPs that they consider very carefully before they decide to support an application by someone who has just written to them."

The number of asylum applications awaiting an initial decision at the end of October this year was 59,000. At the end of December 1995, the figure was 70,000; in 1996 it was 57,000; and in 1997, 52,000.

Four-star petrol banned

FOUR-STAR leaded petrol is to be banned from sale in the new millennium under a European directive, the Government confirmed last night.

Junior transport minister Glenda Jackson said in a Commons written reply that this type of fuel would be forced off the forecourts from 1 January 2000 under regulations being prepared by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions. The move would bring Britain into line

FUEL
By MARTIN HICKMAN

with a directive on fuel quality which was passed by the European Parliament and the European Council last month, a DETR spokeswoman said.

Around five million cars in Britain run on leaded petrol, with around three million of those able to be converted to run on unleaded petrol, according to the DETR. Oil companies were devising lead-free

alternatives for four-star cars without the need to install a catalytic converter, the spokeswoman said.

Ms Jackson stressed the new rules would allow "a very limited supply" of four-star fuel for "historic vehicles". This would probably be made available through classic car clubs.

Four-star has been linked with brain damage in inner-city children and is banned in Germany, the Netherlands, the US and Canada.

THE HOUSE



Handgun owners wait for payout

A TOTAL of 23,000 people are still awaiting compensation for handing in their handguns, the Home Office minister Paul Boateng told MPs during question time. So far, partial payments have been made to 50,300 gun owners, adding up to a total of £62.6m.

More money for the police

THE HOME Secretary was accused of cutting spending on the police by the Tories yesterday. But Jack Straw said: "The truth is that there will be an extra £1.24bn over the next three years." Part of the funding would depend on the police achieving efficiency savings of 2 per cent a year.

TV showcase for young talent

A NEW television "opportunity channel" to give students a chance to make programmes was proposed by broadcaster Melvyn Bragg. In his maiden Lords speech Lord Bragg called for a showcase and training ground for young talent.

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Lords: 2.30pm: Queen's Speech debate, fourth day on industry, economic and social affairs.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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Cost of council corruption inquiry

HOME OFFICE minister Paul Boateng said that the long-running inquiry into alleged corruption by councillors in the Labour-controlled Doncaster inquiry had cost South Yorkshire Police an estimated £200,955.

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200 auto focusing steps make this ultra compact Advanced Photo System Camera the perfect photographic companion.

So whether you're capturing a landscape or are as close to your subject as 50cm, it will take whatever steps necessary to record the details with pin-sharp clarity.

And these aren't the only steps it takes on your behalf. It has a powerful 2x zoom lens, so you don't even have to move closer to your subject to get the perfect picture.

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VECTIS

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SAME DAY DELIVERY FOR ORDERS BEFORE 12.00

Call for clean up of immigration 'rackets'

ASYLUM SEEKERS
By SARAH SCHAEFER

MINISTERS PLEDGED their commitment to crack down on "unsavoury" immigration advisers yesterday, urging MPs to "be very clear" about the advice they gave to constituents about them.

Immigration minister Michael O'Brien condemned the "corrupt and incompetent" conduct of advisers who were "making passports available to people as they walked through the door", adding that the Government would introduce regulation shortly.

He stressed during question time that the forthcoming Immigration and Asylum Bill aimed to speed up decisions on claims for political asylum and to deter economic refugees from seeking to enter Britain.

Mr O'Brien said that, 584 foreigners seeking entry into the United Kingdom had been

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Four-star petrol banned

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Junior transport minister Glenda Jackson said in a Commons written reply that this type of fuel would be forced off the forecourts from 1 January 2000 under regulations being prepared by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions. The move would bring Britain into line

FUEL
By MARTIN HICKMAN

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THE INDEPENDENT
Tuesday 1 December 1998

Scottish 'evolution' towards a new nation

THE IDEA of a new Scottish nation has been the subject of much speculation since the 1979 referendum. Now, with the Scottish National Party (SNP) leading the polls in the upcoming Scottish Parliament elections, the possibility of a new nation is being taken seriously.

At Scotland's first SNP conference, the party's new leader, Alex Salmond, outlined his vision for a new nation. He said: "We are not just a collection of islands and mountains. We are a people with a unique identity and a shared destiny. It is time we took control of our own future."

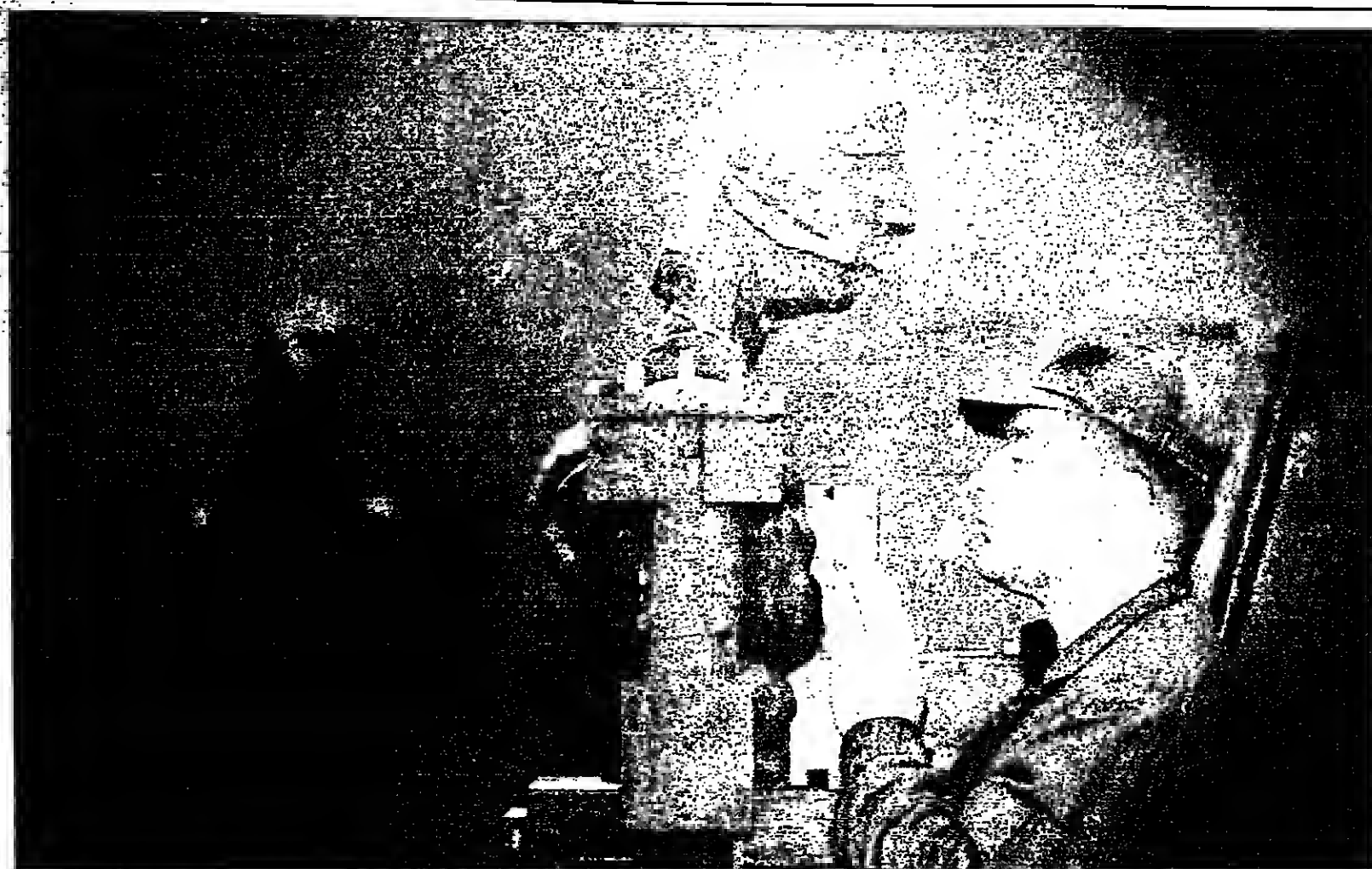
Salmond's speech was met with enthusiasm by the SNP members. He said: "We are not just a collection of islands and mountains. We are a people with a unique identity and a shared destiny. It is time we took control of our own future."

MILLENNIUM

IS THE millennium something to laugh at? Though Peter de Jager, software consultant who writes on getting computers ready for the change, tends not to pre-empt it as comedy, he's decided that "without a sense of humour, none of us is going to make it over this hurdle of our sanity intact."

So he is sponsoring a 2000 Humour Contest from the www.year2000 website. The first prize is £2,500 (£1,400 to the winner, £1,100 to the runner-up). Entries include jokes of all kinds, from serious to silly, from serious to silly, from serious to silly.

Worrying though it is, programmers have been writing "Y2K" lines when they should have



An electrician wiring up a bronze figure by Sir Eduardo Paolozzi before the opening of the Museum of Scotland yesterday Colin McPherson

Scottish museum opened by Queen

UNFAZED BY an ancient trumpet with a dragon-like head and flapping tongue appearing behind her, the Queen opened the 264m Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh yesterday, neatly rounding off a 40-year project on the last St Andrew's Day before home rule.

Before an assembled throng of the Scottish Establishment, Her Majesty kept the speech short and uncontroversial. The museum would be a "fitting home" for all its 10,000 magnificent objects - "a home in which to tell their story for our benefit and for the benefit and enjoyment of those who come after us".

She made no mention of the striking block-house architecture of the building on Chambers Street, nor of whether in telling Scotland's story it bolstered the nationalist cause. Some people have complained there is not enough about the independence heroes William

BY STEPHEN GOODWIN

(Braveheart) Wallace and Robert the Bruce.

In short, the Queen said nothing to ruffle Scots sensitivities and upset the finding of an opinion poll published yesterday that anti-English racism is confined to a "tiny fraction" of the population.

Only 3 per cent of Scots admitted to "disliking the English a lot", according to the poll carried out by ICM for *The Scotsman* newspaper. This contrasts starkly with the 67 per cent who either liked their southern neighbours "a lot, or at the very least, a little".

The poll contradicts fears of growing anti-English feeling indicated by reports of an increase in racist taunts in Scottish schools. It found that the number of Scots who liked English people had risen by three points while those who disliked them had dropped by

two points. And the number who admitted to disliking the English "a little" had fallen 7 per cent - down 1 point.

The poll also suggests that party political loyalties have little bearing on attitudes towards the English - 41 per cent of Scottish National Party (SNP) supporters claimed to like the English "a lot" despite their party's desire for independence.

However, 7 per cent of the SNP's supporters did admit to disliking the English a lot, whereas only 1 per cent of Tories and 2 per cent of Labour and Liberal Democrats said the same. Scottish women were shown to be slightly more tolerant of the English than men.

A trip to the new museum is unlikely to change these perceptions. The approach to Scotland's story has been to tell it through wonderful objects - such as the ancient trumpet - rather than jingoism or an overdone Disney "experience".

Scotland 'evolving towards a nation'

THE IDEA that Scots will wake up one day and find their country has become independent without there ever being a liberating "big bang" gathered force yesterday with the admission from Donald Dewar, the Secretary of State for Scotland, that home rule is an ongoing process.

As Scotland marked St Andrew's Day with a flurry of nationalistic self-affirmation - topped by the opening of the Museum of Scotland - Mr Dewar was obliged to move with the tide.

Speaking in St Andrews, Fife, Mr Dewar said the devolution settlement, setting up a parliament in Edinburgh after 300 years, was not rigid.

"The framework put in place by the Scotland Act explicitly allows for adjustment, to reflect changing circumstances. If through experience and by consent, we want to adjust the settlement, the machinery is in place," he said.

Alex Salmond, leader of the Scottish National Party, was more direct. "A new Scotland is being born," he said in a message to SNP candidates for next May's elections. "The destination of our national journey is independence - all that is to be decided is the speed of our progress."

Mr Salmond underlined his belief that independence would be achieved in stages rather than by sudden upheaval - a view so prevalent among his lieutenants at the party conference that it attracted the jibe: "We're all evolutionary nationalists now."

"Scotland is in the process of independence," the SNP leader said. "But to keep moving with that process we must make the new Parliament work well for all who live here." SNP fundamentalists who once wanted no truck with the home rule

BY STEPHEN GOODWIN
Scotland Correspondent

half-way house are now silent.

George Reid, the SNP's constitutional affairs spokesman, welcomed what he called Labour's "U-turn" and Mr Dewar's acceptance that constitutional change was "a dynamic process and not a single event". There was already a consensus for the Parliament to have powers not covered in the Scotland Act, he said. "These include broadcasting, Europe and taxation."

Labour's campaign strategy has been thrown into a quandary by the humiliation in last week's North West Scotland European by-election when the party came third behind the SNP and the Tories. The SNP hailed the result as proof that "Nat bashing" by Labour was counter-productive, a view shared by many Labour activists in Scotland.

Mr Dewar said it would be "absurd" for a government committed to modernisation to pretend it had the last word on every detail of the constitutional settlement. He also used the St Andrew's Day speech to refocus on his personal favourite themes of equality of opportunity and social justice.

"I want a Scotland which will fight social exclusion," he said. The new Scottish executive should promote prosperity to use the wealth to fight poverty. It should set high standards for schools and share in the modernisation of the welfare state.

"I want that to be our debate - not a wrangle over whether we do or do not tear ourselves out of the Union, but working together to make a stronger Scotland within a stronger United Kingdom."

Hamish McRae,
Review, page 5

The perfect partner.



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MILLENNIUM BUG WATCH

IS THE millennium bug something to laugh about? Though Peter de Jager, a software consultant who lectures on getting computer systems ready for the date change, tends not to present it as comedy, he's decided that "without a sense of humour, none of us is going to make it over this hurdle with our sanity intact".

So he is sponsoring a Year 2000 Humour Contest, run from the www.year2000.com website. The first prize is \$2,500 (£1,480) to the winner's favourite charity. Entries can include "jokes of all kinds, humorous short stories, songs, ditties, etc." although "limericks which were entered in the last contest are not eligible".

Worrying though it is that programmers have been writing "Y2K" limericks when they should have been

fixing programs, one also fears for Mr de Jager's sanity in having to judge the contest. The closing date is 31 December, with the winner chosen by 7 January.

Examples of entries so far are not encouraging: "You know you've been at Y2K too long when... You watch disaster movies to raise your spirits." Or: "How many Year 2000 programmers does it take to change a light bulb? None! It isn't broken yet." Surely knock-knock jokes can't be far behind.

CHARLES ARTHUR

It's not only knowing what to say but also knowing when to keep silent. You can keep talking hour after hour with the new dual band Nokia 6150, but it also knows when to keep silent. Touch one button to change the settings for a meeting, for instance, and the Nokia 6150 will alert you silently and let through only priority calls - or no calls at all. And because the Nokia 6150 works on GSM 900 and GSM 1800 networks, it improves international roaming. The dual band Nokia 6150. It's the perfect balance. Everything you want in a mobile phone, plus a few extras you might not expect.

NOKIA
CONNECTING PEOPLE

Education: Traditional schools overshadowed as GCSE results justify longer days, target-setting and homework clubs

Technology colleges top league table

SIX YEARS' league tables are initiated for both achievement and improvement by technology colleges, which are backed by this government and the last as a way of raising standards. Their success vindicates the government's support for a longer school day, target-setting and lunchtime homework clubs, which have been pioneered in the 15 city technology colleges (CTCs) set up by the Conservative government. The four most improved schools at GCSE on a government list issued yesterday are city technology colleges. The list is based on the increase in the percentage of pupils gaining five or more good grades between 1995 and 1998. The top school by the tables is Newstead, the CTCs points core, is also a CTC. Two technology colleges are in the top ten for the highest proportion of pupils gaining five good grades.

Sir Cyril Taylor, chairman of the Technology Colleges Trust, said: "These outstanding results show how effective the CTC style of education is in raising standards. Many of the techniques pioneered by the pilot group of CTCs are now being used by many other

BY JUDITH JUDD
AND BEN RUSSELL

schools, including the 330 specialist schools."

Overall, 66 per cent of pupils at the colleges achieved five A*-C grades compared with a national average of 46 per cent.

However, results from another CTC, Harris in Croydon, south London, show how difficult it is to sustain improvement. Harris was the most improved school last year, but this year the proportion of pupils achieving five or more good grades at GCSE fell back.

The top independent school at A-level is King Edward's School in Birmingham, with a point score of 37.7 - the equivalent of nearly four grade As. The top state school is King Edward VI Grammar School in Chelmsford, Essex, with 33.5.

Some of the comprehensive in the top 20 select pupils either by interview or by deciding a proportion of their intake by a test. Today's tables are the most sophisticated yet produced and offer more information than before. The new score aims to reflect the achievements of all pupils by giving points for every grade, not just the top three. It is based closely on the system used for years for university en-

trance at A-level. But most newspapers continue to rank schools by the proportion of pupils achieving five or more good GCSE grades.

Teachers believe that both measures are unfair. John Dufford, general secretary of the Secondary Heads Association, said: "The tables give the impression that they are comparing like with like, when it is well known that schools start from a very different situations."

David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said: "The tables remain an unreliable and unfair indicator of schools' achievements. As long as the five A*-C grades remain as the major factor in determining success, the achievements of those pupils who obtain D grades and below will be written off."

Ministers are refining the tables to produce a new value-added measure, which will compare pupils' level of achievement when they enter a school with their exam results when they leave.

This year, the proportion of pupils gaining five good GCSE grades has risen slightly and 7,000 fewer pupils are leaving school without any qualifications. The pass rate at A-level also went up.



Stephen Vernon (left) and Katy Gaunt, both 15, in class at Jeff Joseph Sale Moor Technology College in Greater Manchester. Martin Rickett

Britain's most improved school

NO ENGLISH state school has improved faster than a secondary modern serving one of the country's most deprived communities.

BY BEN RUSSELL
Education Correspondent

recorded a faster increase. Jeff Joseph's achievement was matched only by Bacon's College, a city technology college in Southwark.

Jeff Joseph became a technology college in 1994. The school has doubled in size since 1990 and now has 1,000 pupils.

It has been oversubscribed for three years. Jeff Joseph opened in 1938, but has expanded into modern buildings on its site on the edge of Manchester. Some £1.5m has been invested in computer systems alone since the school gained its technology college status.

Schools in Trafford are highly selective - with about 38 per cent of children going to grammar schools - leaving the secondary moderns coping with many of the area's educational problems.

At Jeff Joseph a third of the eleven-year-olds starting at the school have a reading age of nine or below.

David Walmsley, who has been head teacher at the school for the past three years, said: "A reading age of nine is the age at which you will cope with the curriculum; otherwise, it's very difficult."

"We have a programme which focuses on reading and literacy which works across the school. We help the very poor readers and we have reading clubs with senior citizens

who come in and help us hear the children read."

Mr Walmsley spends much of his time raising the expectations and confidence of his pupils.

The school uses sophisticated measures of each child's progress based on frequent tests to help them set targets for doing better. There are award ceremonies and merits for good work. Children who have made progress are mentioned in dispatches - in the head's newsletter to parents.

Out-of-school activities also play their part. There are sports clubs and music lessons for 150 children. Some have won prizes for their poetry.

The school has also opened a sixth form, now 50 strong, with

South Trafford College, to help to raise pupils' expectations.

There are lunchtime clubs to help children with their schoolwork, and after-school lessons, compulsory and voluntary, to allow pupils to catch up.

"The reasons behind the college's improvement are the hard work of the staff, support for students after school and at lunchtime, rewards, target setting and monitoring of the progress of students," said Mr Walmsley.

"It's a school where we have to work hard for the support of some parents; where we are able to achieve success the support of parents is vital."

"We try to encourage teachers and students to set targets, and have high expectations."

Important news for Norwich and Peterborough customers.

Important News for Borrowers

The rates of interest for new and existing mortgage customers (in appropriate cases the basic rate) will decrease by 0.5% with effect from 1st December 1998. The Society's standard variable base rate will become 7.56%.

The new rates continue to reflect the Society's commitment to mutualism and the benefits that brings to customers.

Fixed rate mortgages will not be affected during the contractual fixed rate period. There will also be no change to the interest rates for existing Secured Personal Loans regulated by the Consumer Credit Act 1974.

In cases where mortgage interest rate changes are subject to notice, the decrease will take place after the appropriate notice period which will commence on 1st December 1998.

For customers participating in the Society's annual review procedure, this interest rate change will be taken into account when calculating new monthly payments at the next review in early 1999 or, in appropriate cases, the anniversary of the mortgage.

New Rates for Savers

1st December 1998 to 31st March 1999

TYPE OF ACCOUNT	PREVIOUS ANNUAL INTEREST RATES	NEW ANNUAL INTEREST RATES
SPECIAL 88		
88 days notice		
£100,000 and over	6.56	5.58
CAR 7	7.20	5.72
£50,000 to £99,999	6.65	5.32
CAR 7	6.85	5.45
£25,000 to £49,999	6.37	5.09
CAR 7	6.56	5.21
£10,000 to £24,999	6.08	4.66
CAR 7	6.28	4.87
£5,000 to £9,999	5.27	4.21
CAR 7	5.40	4.30
£2,500 to £4,999	4.85	3.84
CAR 7	4.90	3.90
TESSA SELECT	8.00	7.50
TESSA ELITE	7.40	7.00
TESSA ELITE II	8.00	7.50
ELITE INTEREST ACCOUNT	6.00	4.80

POSTMASTER II		
Easy access by post		
£100,000 and over	7.25	6.80
£50,000 to £99,999	7.10	6.68
£25,000 to £49,999	7.00	6.60
£10,000 to £24,999	6.65	6.32
£5,000 to £9,999	6.15	5.82
£2,500 to £4,999	6.00	5.48

POSTMASTER ONLY		
Rates reflect those shown above for Postmaster II except		
£1,000 to £4,999	6.00	4.80
£500 to £999	5.25	4.20

POSTAL 10 (2nd issue)		
18 days notice		
£100,000 and over	7.35	6.88
Monthly income	7.11	6.68
£50,000 to £99,999	7.25	6.80
Monthly income	7.01	6.60
£25,000 to £49,999	7.10	6.68
Monthly income	6.87	6.45
£10,000 to £24,999	6.65	6.18
Monthly income	6.44	5.93
£5,000 to £9,999	6.50	5.20
Monthly income	6.21	5.04
£2,500 to £4,999	6.10	4.98
Monthly income	5.93	4.74

POSTAL 10P ONLY		
Rates reflect those shown above for Postal 10 (2nd issue) except		
£1,000 to £4,999	6.10	4.88
£500 to £999	5.35	4.28

DEPOSITS		
(PERCENTAGE)		
£100 and over	3.15	2.52
£50 and over	2.65	2.12

PRESTIGE 30		
30 days notice		
£100,000 and over	6.40	5.12
£50,000 to £99,999	6.10	4.88
£25,000 to £49,999	5.80	4.64
£10,000 to £24,999	5.55	4.40
£5,000 to £9,999	4.85	3.98
£2,500 to £4,999	4.60	3.68
£500 to £999	3.00	2.40

OFFSHORE SAVINGS ACCOUNT		
Operated by post through our Gibraltar branch		
£100,000 and over	7.00	6.20
£50,000 to £99,999	6.75	5.95
£25,000 to £49,999	6.50	5.70
£10,000 to £24,999	6.25	5.45

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£25,000 to £49,999	6.50	5.70
£10,000 to £24,999	6.25	5.45

Site guard defects to join road protesters

BY LINUS GREGORIADIS

ECO-WARRIORS were celebrating last night after a security guard at the planned site of a new toll road defected to the side of the protesters.

Dean Smith, 23, who gave up his 28-an-hour job after only a week, spoke out against the privately owned Birmingham Northern Relief Road, which will cut through the countryside in Warwickshire, the West Midlands and Staffordshire. He said: "I've just had a 12-hour shift, I've been there six days... I stood there and I thought about everything that was going on and I came to the conclusion I was doing the wrong thing - I was on the wrong side of the fence. So I've come to this side, make a stance and get some satisfaction from it. The Government takes liberties, too many liberties."

Mr Smith told GMTV: "I've done six days but that will now be terminated to something like £1-an-hour so I've lost out a bit but at the end of the day I feel better for it." Dozens of protesters are positioned in a network of tunnels at the site along the route in Weeford, Staffordshire.

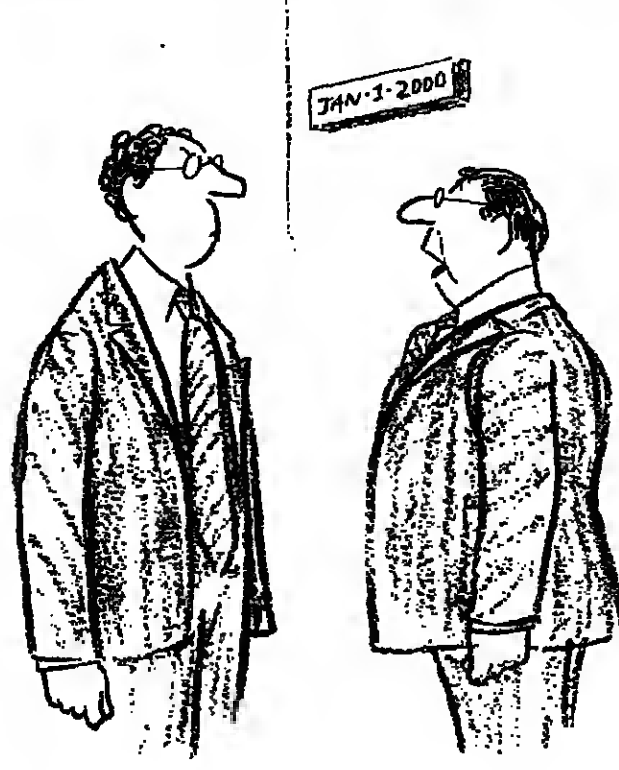
In October campaigners in the Alliance Against the BNR failed in a High Court bid to overturn a decision by John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, to allow the £700m project to go ahead. They argued that the 27-mile road would cut a huge swath through Green Belt land, cross nature sites, destroy homes and threaten local jobs.

The road is intended to relieve congestion on the M6 around Birmingham and work is due to start next year.

Fraser Halliday, of Project Security Limited, Mr Smith's former employer, said: "We fully screen all security officers to industry standards but we cannot screen anybody for their sympathies for people like the protesters."

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Hundreds of sex offenders 'slip net'

ONLY A handful of the estimated 350 sex offenders who have failed to register with the police have been prosecuted, despite the scheme operating for more than 14 months.

Setting up the register and monitoring the sex offenders is costing the police in England and Wales about £500,000 a month. The total cost so far is more than £6.5m.

Figures from the police, however, show that most sex of-

BY JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

fenders - 6,262 or 95 per cent of those registered in the first year - have informed the authorities about their movements.

The Sex Offenders Act came into force in September last year in response to alarm at the lack of information on and monitoring of paedophiles once they were released.

Under the Act, an estimated

6,615 sex offenders who were either being released from jail under licence, or who received a community sentence such as probation, must within 14 days inform the police of their address, or whether they have moved, or changed their name.

Failure to comply with the new law is punishable by a maximum of six months in jail. But despite the publicity surrounding the new powers only a few offenders who failed to be

registered have been punished so far. Several have been jailed for the offence.

Tony Butler, the Chief Constable of Gloucestershire and vice-chairman of the Association of Chief Police Officers' crime committee with responsibility for the management and monitoring of sex offenders, said that in the first year the Act was implemented, 353 offenders had not registered.

Some have never registered.

some have moved address and not informed the police, and some may have gone abroad and do not need to register. The Home Office is drawing up plans to block this loophole for "foreign sex holidays".

Mr Butler argued that this figure compared favourably with the United States where compliance rates range from 30 per cent in some states to 85 per cent at best.

The annual cost of imple-

menting the Act is expected to exceed £7m. Mr Butler added that a significant extra expense has been the cost of policing high-profile paedophiles. For example, the release of the notorious sex killer Sidney Cook cost Avon and Somerset police £150,000 in managing public disorder.

There are an estimated 260,000 convicted sex offenders in the UK, 110,000 of whom have offended against children, but

as the legislation is not retrospective most do not have to register.

Harry Fletcher, assistant general secretary of the National Association of Probation Officers, argued: "The authorities have done well to get nearly all the names to register, but it still only represents 5 per cent of known offenders."

Meanwhile, a further measure to prevent people convicted of sex crimes from

reoffending comes into force today. The Sex Offender Order will allow courts to ban convicted offenders from going near, or visiting, places, such as schools, from specified activities, such as joining a Scout group.

Breach of the order, which will last five years, can lead to a maximum five-year jail term.

Police officers can apply an order against any sex offender whose activities cause for concern.



Devastation after the IRA's 1996 blast in Manchester

Manchester's famous theatre returns after longest interval

AFTER WHAT must be one of the longest intervals in theatre history, Manchester's Royal Exchange reopened last night, more than two years after it was devastated by an IRA bomb.

After a £31m re-fit, the theatre opened its doors to a performance of Stanley Houghton's turn-of-the-century potboiler *Hindle Wakes* - the play whose run was halted by the bomb.

As a sell-out audience started to pour into the theatre, Alan Burrough, a security guard, said: "Over the past two-and-a-half years it is the ordinary public we have missed."

"Today we have had people coming in saying, 'Hello again, Alan.' That's what we've been missing. The atmosphere here is great," said Mr Burrough, who cleared people from the theatre on June 15, 1996, after police received a bomb warning.

He helped direct up to 20 people to safety from the theatre and box-office a few minutes before the bomb ex-

BY ANDREW BUNCOMBE
in Manchester

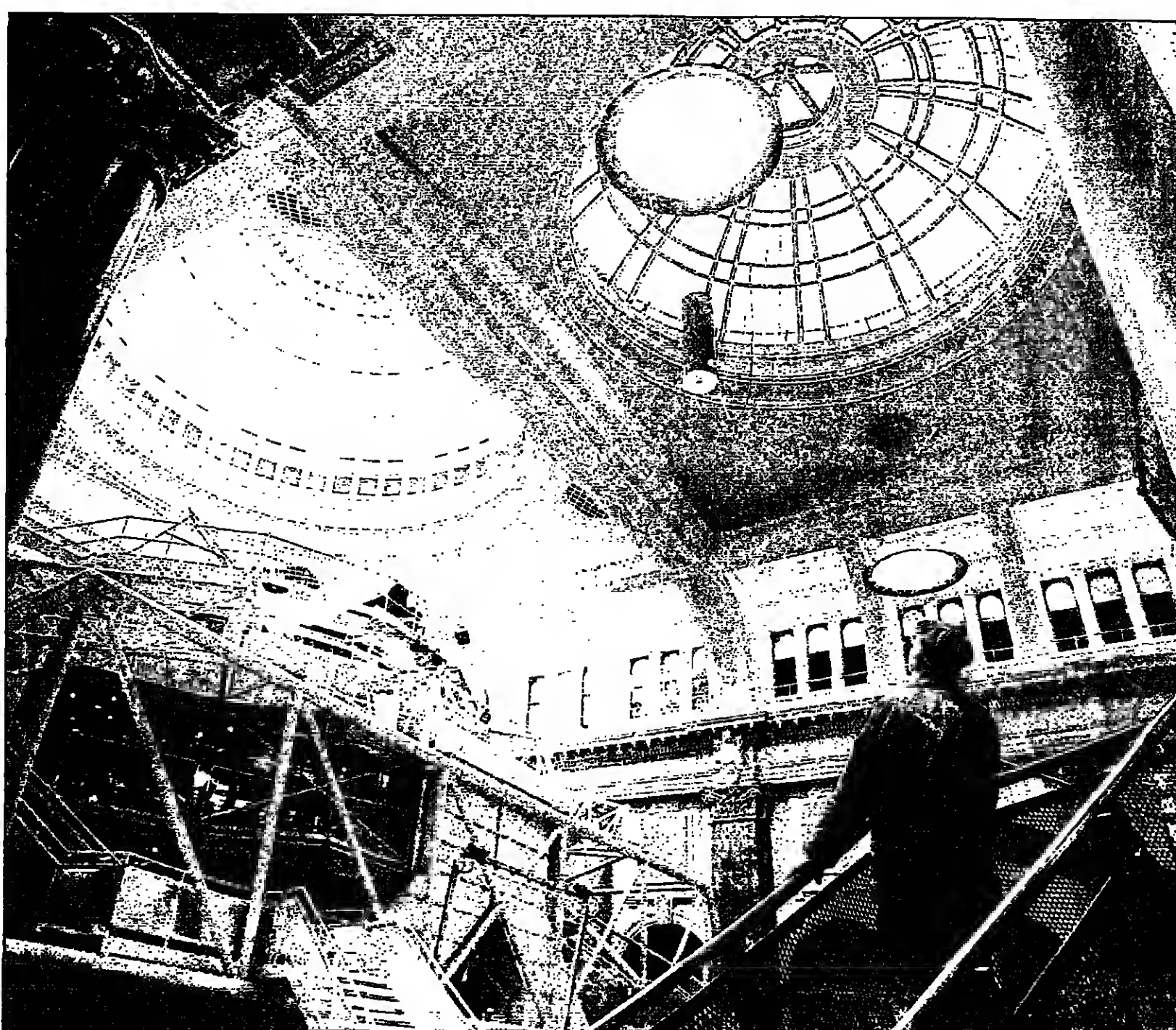
ploded. "Not only could we hear the blast, we could actually see it," added Mr Burrough, who remembers taking shelter from the explosion in a shop doorway.

The bomb destroyed all three of the 19th-century building's glass domes. At one point, engineers doubted whether it could be saved.

But thanks to the largest award outside London from the National Lottery's heritage fund, the building now boasts a new blue glass dome, rehearsal rooms and a separate studio with seating for 120 people.

There is also a new roof that allows scenery to be hoisted more easily. When the company performs *King Lear* with Tom Courtenay later in the season, it is planned that the new roof will be opened to the gods.

"In one sense, the bomb has allowed us to refurbish in a way that would not have been pos-



A 'magical atmosphere' has returned to Manchester's Royal Exchange theatre, which reopened yesterday after a £31m re-fit Andrew Fox

sible otherwise," said John Goodfellow, the theatre's senior spokesman.

"The atmosphere here today has been magical. I think it is certainly the most important day for the company since it was founded in 1976."

"But it is also important for Manchester. The theatre was very close to where the bomb went off and it is the first of the major reconstruction projects to be completed in the city."

Many members of the original cast, including the actress Sue Johnson, returned yesterday to take their parts in the play, which was halted after only eight performances when the bomb exploded, causing damage estimated at £200 million in central Manchester.

During the refurbishment work, the company has been staging performances in a tented building across the city at Upper Campfield.

Green quits as pictures seized

BY STEVE BOGGAN

A GREEN PARTY councillor has resigned from a London council after a police raid on his home in which indecent images of children were seized.

Paul Thomas, 38, stepped down when the chief executive at Hackney council demanded his resignation from the social services committee, which supervises children's homes.

Police raided Mr Thomas's home in Stoke Newington, north London, last Wednesday and took away computer equipment and photographs of children. He resigned his seat last Friday.

A Scotland Yard spokesman said a man had been released on police bail until April in connection with the distribution and possession of indecent photographs of children.

It is understood detectives were acting on a tip-off. It is not known whether Mr Thomas is alleged to have been part of a wider paedophile ring.

Kevin Saunders, a Green Party spokesman, said Mr Thomas is being treated for "a complete nervous breakdown". He has been suspended from the party pending the police inquiry.

Hackney is still trying to repair its image after the revelation two years ago that one of its social workers, Mark Trotter, had sexually abused six children in his care before he died of Aids.

Nicaragua Emergency

Hurricane Mitch has ravaged Nicaragua leaving an estimated 800,000 people in desperate need.

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THE RIGHTS OF EVERY MAN

'The Independent' is publishing daily each of the 30 Articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Illustrated by Ralph Steadman, to mark its 50th anniversary on 10 December.

Article 20

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

(2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21

(1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

(2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.

(3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

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Duty free may be reprieved

LEADERS of France and Germany floated the idea yesterday of a five-year stay of execution on plans to abolish free shopping next June, the start of the two-day shopping spree in Potsdam, Prussia's subsequent Russia's - garrison town, both conceded the Franco-German political axis had to a halt recently. But promised a "fresh wind" in relationship and sought to hammer out a common front in coming battles over European integration. The meeting was the first formal Franco-German summit since the end of the Kohl era.

The first significant breakthrough for the campaign to end duty free, the German Chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, asked his Finance Minister, Hans Eichel, to use the incoming German EU presidency to lobby both the European Commission and the 14 other EU finance ministers to review their decision.

In a letter dated 25 November and obtained by *The Independent*, Mr Schröder warned that scrapping duty free will

BY KATHERINE BUTLER
in Brussels
AND IMRE KARACS
in Potsdam

lead to "substantial job losses not just in Great Britain and in Germany but throughout the European Union. This abolition" he wrote, "is at odds with our avowed goal of reducing unemployment in the EU."

Lionel Jospin, the French Prime Minister, is expected to back the German call for a rethink. The French Finance Minister, Dominique Strauss-Kahn, will use a meeting with EU colleagues in Brussels today to unveil a new report showing that 12,000 French transport jobs are at risk. The French are demanding that the European Commission produce a thorough study of the socio-economic consequences of abolition. A Franco-German alliance on the issue could be formalised at today's summit of the French and German leaders in Potsdam.

Mario Monti, the European Commissioner for the internal market who has turned abolition of duty free into a person-

al crusade, yesterday dismissed the suggestion that it could be salvaged. A spokeswoman pointed out that it would take a unanimous decision of the finance ministers to overturn the 1991 decision to axe it.

But the strength of support from the German Chancellor has taken British diplomats by surprise. Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, displayed some ambivalence to the question of an impact study when it was discussed by EU finance ministers in May, but British sources conceded yesterday that the issue was one of great popular concern.

The Irish Transport Minister, Mary O'Rourke, also said yesterday that after a series of informal contacts she believes there is mounting pressure for a postponement. "France and Germany are in agreement with having a full look at it and if possible in having an extension of time. I think it will go down to that eventually."

"There is a distinct shift of policy. The winds of change are blowing in favour of the retention of duty free."



Austrians rampaging as devils and 'krampusse' (ghosts) near Salzburg in a traditional annual reminder of the 'eternal evil everywhere' AP

Danny the Red upsets Jospin team

THIRTY YEARS and six months after he was forcibly removed from France, Daniel Cohn-Bendit is establishing another French government.

The 1968 student leader, turned German Green, turned French Green, has caused havoc in the ranks of Lionel Jospin's pink-red-green coalition in the last two weeks.

Mr Cohn-Bendit, 53, a German Euro MP, was chosen last month to lead the list of the French Greens in next June's European elections. Since then, a series of acerbic, and amusing, comments in favour of a federal Europe, free markets, illegal immigrants and soft drugs but against nuclear power and traditional left-wing thinking has sent green cannoning violently against red and pink.

Robert Hue, the Communist Party leader, says there is a "real danger" of the coalition coming apart if Mr Cohn-Bendit is not ordered to play by the polite rules of coalition politics. Leaders of the radical, Eurosceptic wing of the Socialists described him at the weekend as a "buffoon" and a "radish" - red on the outside, white (that is, blank) inside.

In an attempt to defuse the tension, Mr Cohn-Bendit invited Mr Hue to dinner in Paris last night. Mr Hue accepted but nervously hoped his host had not invited the press.

If the Greens exceed the 5 per cent minimum vote for winning seats in Strasbourg, Mr Cohn-Bendit will become the first politician to be elected to the European Parliament from two different countries. He has set himself, and the French Greens, two far more ambitious targets.

First, he wants to supersede the Communists as the second force on the French left (which would require about 8 or 9 per cent). Second, he would like to beat Jean-Marie Le Pen's far-right National Front (which would require about 15 per cent).

Mr Cohn-Bendit is a German citizen, born in France in 1945 of German-Jewish parents. He is running in France next year under the European Union rule that allows any EU citizen to stand in a European or local election anywhere in the Union.

On 21 May 1968, three weeks

BY JOHN LICHFIELD
in Paris

into the student protests, Mr Cohn-Bendit was taken to the German border and banned from France. He settled in Frankfurt and became a teacher, an ecologist, a local government official and a Green MEP.

As energetic and plausible as ever, Mr Cohn-Bendit says that he wishes to take the European debate away from the tired ground of Brussels bureaucracy and the dangers of the single currency (which he supports). He wants to focus on Europe as a force for economic, social and personal freedom: "une idée jouissante de l'Europe" - a "joyful" or "orgasmic" idea.

The former left-wing rebel believes in free markets, more flexibility at work, open Euro-



Daniel Cohn-Bendit, 53: Leading France's Greens

pean borders, reduced taxes and the privatisation of nationalised industries. But he also believes in a generous degree of legalisation of illegal immigrants, the abandonment of nuclear power, the legalisation of soft drugs and a solid, minimum welfare net for all.

Opinion polls suggest that Cohn-Benditisme, vintage 1998, appeals to young French people as much as the 1968 variety - precisely because it breaks away from the traditional language and ideological categories of both left and right. One survey, admittedly six months before polling day, gave him 9 per cent of intending voters, three times the Greens' score at the last European elections.

IN BRIEF

Iran mourners in street protest

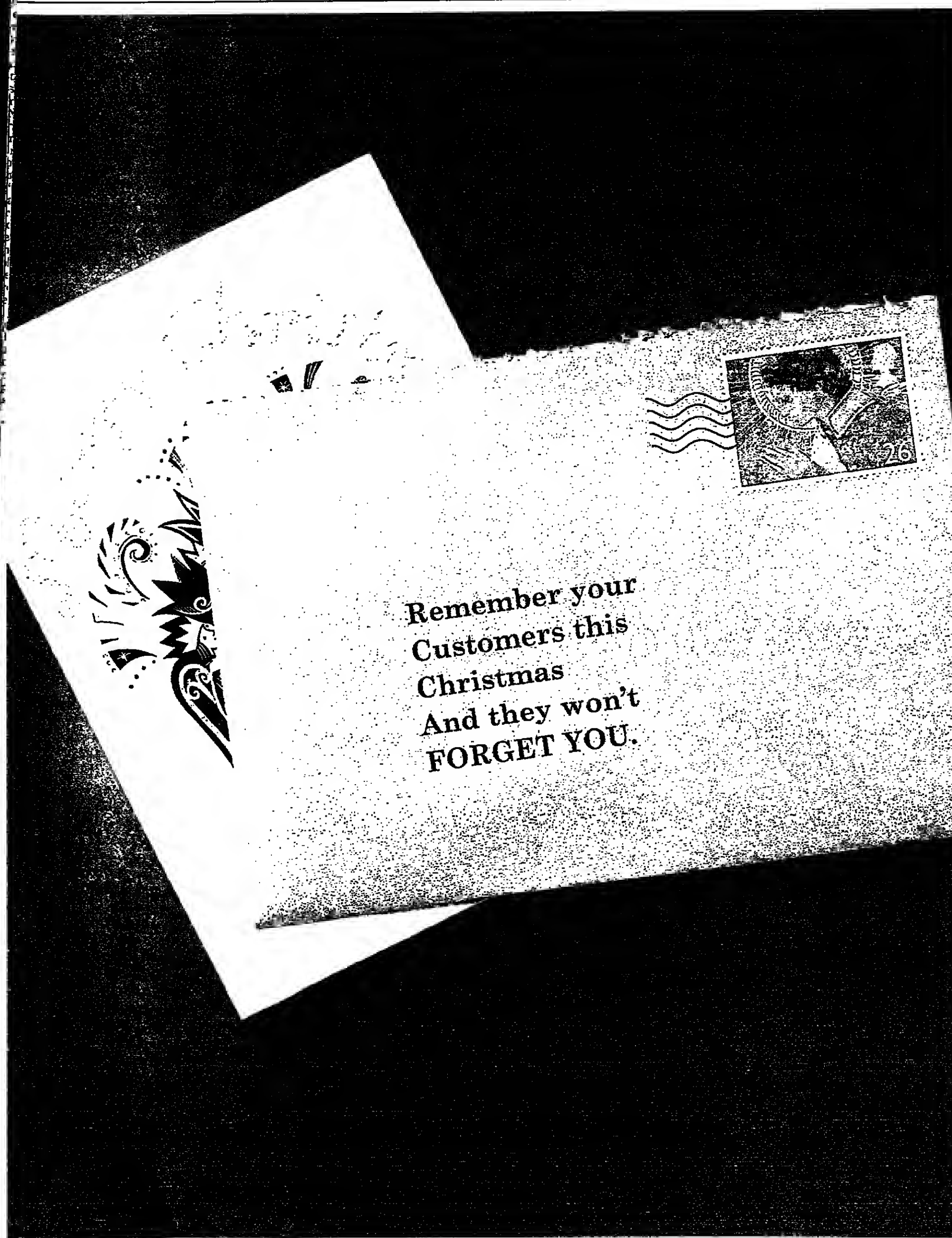
THOUSANDS of Iranians mourning the stabbing to death of dissident Dariush Foruhar and his wife took to the streets to call for the release of political prisoners. About 10,000 gathered at the Fakhr Mosque in Tehran.

Russian mafia 'godfather' on trial

SWISS POLICE provided massive security yesterday as an alleged godfather of the Russian mafia went on trial in Geneva. Sergei Mikhailov is charged with belonging to an illegal organisation and breaking Swiss property laws.

Police dissolve body in test

BRUSSELS POLICE, investigating allegations a clergyman dissolved his murder victims in cleaning fluid, themselves dissolved a dead body to see if it could be done. The press yesterday accused them of not respecting the dead.



Card reproduced courtesy of Robot Design.

Triple murderer trapped by TV show

FRANCES KENNEDY
and
JASON BENNETTO

ITALIAN man who has been in Britain for nine years confessed yesterday to murdering his parents and brother. The producers of an Italian television show specialising in missing persons, who had convinced him to return to Italy after filming his confession in London, are now crying foul. They say the Italian police have used their exclusive. Ferdinando Carretta, 36, was missing shortly after his family left on a holiday in August 1989. They never returned. He disappeared, becoming one of the main suspects. The television producers initially said they were used against their will to lure Mr Carretta home and complained that the police had broken a deal with them. It emerged last night that they had wanted to break the news first in the most dramatic way, by airing his confession on their top-rated, one-time show. He arrived in London on Sunday to take part in a popular programme *Chi l'ha visto?* The subject was to have been the mysterious disappearance of his family, who vanished after setting off on their camper-van. But instead of being whisked to the RAI television studios, Mr Carretta was met at Rome airport by police, who escorted him to his native northern city of Parma. During six hours of questioning, he allegedly confessed to the murders.



Ferdinando Carretta (right) confessed to killing his parents (top left) and burying them in a dump near Parma (centre) after his arrest in Rome (bottom left) EPA

Until about a month ago, when he was discovered during a chance stop-and-search operation in London, he was on Interpol's missing persons file and the Italian police had no idea whether he was alive. Mr Carretta had been resident in Britain since 1989, where he had claimed unemployment benefit and had been employed in various menial jobs, including as a motorcycle

courier. Officers described him as a loner. Police were baffled to discover him living in squalor on his own in a one-bedroom flat in Ilford, Essex, after they found millions of pounds in his family's bank account. Two weeks ago the Italian police were informed by Interpol of his existence and visited London to interview him. He told them his family had

travelled to South America. The Italians were preparing to obtain an extradition warrant to bring him back to Italy. However, last week an investigating magistrate in Italy said there was not enough evidence to press for his extradition. His parents, Giuseppe and Marta, and their son Nicola were last seen in August 1989 before they headed off on holiday in their van to France,

Spain and North Africa. Ferdinando, their eldest son, did not go on the family holiday and disappeared a couple of days later, after having cashed two cheques. To do that he forged the signature of his father and brother. Extensive police searches failed to find any trace of the family. Their camper turned up three months later, abandoned in a street in Milan.

The fact that Ferdinando had disappeared around the same time, had bought a pistol several months earlier and had had a difficult relationship with his father prompted speculation that he may have murdered his family. There was speculation also that his father had absconded with a vast quantity of company slush funds, and that Ferdinando then murdered him for the money.

As soon as he was discovered in London, the producers of *Chi l'ha visto?*, who had followed the case closely for years, visited Britain. They spent several days with him, persuading him to return to Rome. They insisted they had received guarantees from the Italian police that he would not be arrested or taken to his home town. They accused the authorities

yesterday of making "a shameful exhibition" for allowing television cameramen to film Mr Carretta's arrival at Fiumicino airport in Rome. An Interpol spokesman dismissed the criticism.

Mr Carretta's lawyer, Filippo Dinacci, said his client had been desperate to confess: "He wanted to get it off his chest. He had been living like a hermit in London. He had, in a sense, jailed himself."

During his confession on Sunday night, Mr Carretta allegedly told the Italian police he had disposed of the corpses in a dump on the outskirts of Parma.

The motive to the confession remains a mystery. In his confession, Mr Carretta allegedly said he had killed his father simply because he had been reprimanded by him, and that he had then got rid of his mother and brother because they had witnessed the murder.

Mr Carretta also apparently spoke of his family in affectionate terms. "He appears to have a double personality: one moment he is very lucid and smart - the next he is just not there," said his lawyer, Mr Dinacci.

The lawyer has asked for a psychiatric assessment to determine whether his client is fit to stand trial.

There remain questions as to whether Mr Carretta will ever come to court because of his apparently unbalanced state of mind and because the bodies of his parents and brother may never be recovered.

Serbia's Adolf' denies genocide at war crime trial

HE BOASTED of killing 20 or 30 Muslims before his morning coffee and jocularly called himself 'Serbia's Adolf'. But yesterday the wheels of international justice caught up with Goran Jeliscic as the 30-year-old Bosnian Serb went on trial in The Hague for genocide.

Terence Bowers, prosecuting for the International War

CRIMES TRIBUNAL

said Jeliscic's Nazi nickname illustrated the "perverse pride" he took in the genocidal symbolism that it represented.

He told the tribunal judges that Jeliscic had admitted in interviews to killing many more victims than the dozen or so

Muslims and Croats he admitted to. "We will never be able to fix the exact number," Mr Bowers said, "but his victims certainly number well over a hundred." Bosnia descended into an ethnic and religious civil war in 1992, pitting the former Yugoslav republic's Muslims and Catholic Croats against Orthodox Serbs.

According to Mr Bowers, Jeliscic was released from prison in 1992 by the Bosnian Serb nationalists and sent to the northern town of Brcko on a mission to eliminate the town's Muslim-Croat majority.

As with most of northern and eastern Bosnia, Brcko succumbed quickly to the Bosnian Serbs' well-planned offensive in

the spring of 1992. Hundreds of thousands of Muslims and Croats were left trapped behind the lines of the victorious Serbs.

The UN prosecutor said Jeliscic told investigators he was given a list of prominent Muslims and Croats on arrival in Brcko and told to find and kill them. It would not have been

difficult as non-Serb civilians were immediately herded into camps as soon as the Serbs took over a town. The detention centres were based in sports centres and factories.

A witness at the trial recalled watching Jeliscic shoot a prisoner through the head while he begged for mercy. "It was my impression they [Jeliscic and his

colleagues] enjoyed it more when they begged for mercy," he said.

"He was not a reluctant tool of the genocide who was being compelled by Serb authorities to act against his will," the prosecutor said.

Jeliscic's lawyer argues that his client is mentally unfit to stand trial. He has pleaded not

guilty to the charge of genocide, which carries a maximum sentence of life imprisonment.

If he is found guilty, it will be the first genocide conviction by the court, which was set up in the Dutch capital in 1993. An earlier genocide case against another Bosnian Serb, Milan Kovacevic, collapsed when the accused died in jail.

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Britain plotted to depose Sukarno

BY PAUL LASHMAR
AND JAMES OLIVER

THE FOREIGN Office secretly helped the Indonesian military to overthrow the country's former nationalist President Sukarno in the early 1960s, new evidence shows. Their actions brought to power the now notorious pro-Western President Suharto, who ruled from 1966 until earlier this year.

The Foreign Office has always denied Britain was involved in the fall of Sukarno. But new revelations show British intelligence agencies and propaganda specialists carried out covert operations to overthrow his regime.

With Sukarno neutralised the Indonesian military was free to murder hundreds of thousands of suspected communists. Amnesty International has said Suharto sanctioned



Sukarno: GCHQ passed secrets to his enemies

about 500,000 murders. In 1975 Suharto's regime also invaded East Timor and killed a third of the population.

As President Sukarno's future hung in the balance in late 1965, owing to growing military discontent, Britain sent a senior Foreign Office official and pro-

paganda specialist to boost anti-Sukarno operations.

Norman Reddaway was given £100,000 by the head of the Foreign Office, Joe later Lord, Garner to manipulate the media. Mr Reddaway, now 81, says he was told "to do anything I could do to get rid of Sukarno".

The former Foreign Office diplomat says the removal of Sukarno was considered a huge success. Indonesia was to become one of Britain's biggest customers for arms.

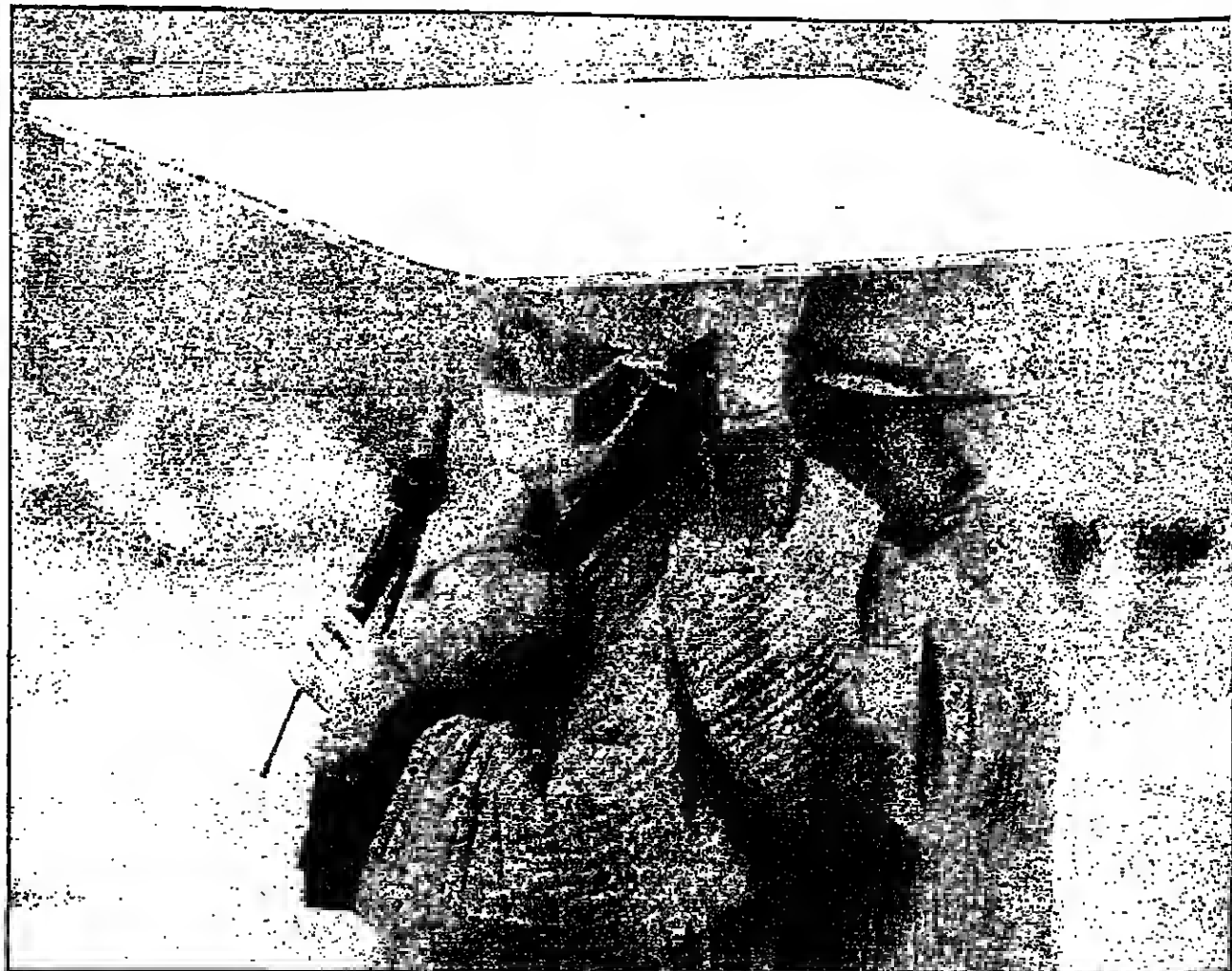
Sukarno had become president in 1949 after Indonesia won independence from the Netherlands. Western concern grew over the strength of the Indonesian Communist Party and Sukarno's policy of nationalising Western assets. The Foreign Office was enraged by Indonesian efforts to destabilise the Malaysian Federation.

In the early 1960s a small unit of the FO's information research department (IRD) went to Singapore to join MI6 and Army psychological warfare officers to spread anti-Sukarno propaganda. IRD was a covert cold-war propaganda operation set up in 1948. In the 1960s it had more than 400 staff.

In late 1965, Mr Reddaway was sent to run the IRD unit. His team worked alongside MI6 officers on covert operations, assisting anti-Sukarno elements in the military. Britain's GCHQ eavesdropping agency listened in to Sukarno's government communications and passed on information to his opponents in the military.

The evidence of Britain's involvement is published this week in Paul Lashmar's book, *'Britain's Secret Propaganda War 1948-1997'*.

Review, page 9



Monks protecting themselves during an outbreak of inter-Buddhist violence that left seven injured in Seoul yesterday. About 2,000 monks tried to retake Chogy Temple, which had been seized by dissidents. AFP

How counter culture can save our soul

STREET LIFE

SAMOTECHNY LANE, MOSCOW

"WHAT'S THIS jungle here?" demands the customer. "That's just Marifat, warming herself," says the shop assistant mildly.

"It's like hacking your way through the Amazon to get to the fish fingers," says the customer.

We are in the Olla mini-mart at the bottom of Samotechny Lane. The Azeri owner has placed a small, plastic palm tree just inside the doorway to welcome the customers. Under the palm tree stands Marifat, our local herb seller, holding up bunches of parsley.

She is blocking the doorway, it has to be said. On the other hand, it is minus 15C outside, where this poor Uzbek grandmother usually stands. It is so cold that she has to keep her parsley, brought up fresh from Tashkent, wrapped in scarves inside a bag.

The shop assistant, a friendly young man called Sergei, has taken pity on her. He tries to cajole the customer: "Let me get those fish fingers for you, sir."

It does not cost much to be considerate, you might think. However, in the former Soviet Union, rudeness is more often the rule. The Ukrainian press reported recently that a woman had lost her eye after a fight at a market. She dropped a jar of mayonnaise and refused to pay for it. The enraged trader stabbed her in the eye with a shard from the bottle.

Life in Russia is a constant struggle. Even if you have enough to eat and can afford winter boots, it is a tiresome battle with quotidian problems. There is no toilet paper in the shops today. The gas goes out, so you have an ice-cold bath. The bureaucrat you need to see is always having lunch in the only time you are available. It is all too easy to vent your frustration on your fellows.

More than that, the prevailing culture seems to de-

mand that you abuse others. Russians are wonderfully warm and hospitable to their friends but churlish to people they do not know. (They think we are superficially polite but cold in our friendships.) In Russia, to be courteous is to show weakness. Power is everything. You must grovel to your superiors and kick your inferiors.

All of which is why the Olla mini-mart is very special. If democracy must grow from below rather than being imposed from above, then this is a workshop of democracy. It is all thanks to the culture of respect the assistants have created.

When the store first opened, two young women greeted the customers. Both teachers, Teresa and Irina were forced into shop work because they could not make ends meet. Instead of sulking, they began, as they put it, "educating the public" by being unfailingly pleasant. The customers found they enjoyed it and flocked to the shop.

Although the imported groceries were expensive, there was always a queue at the counter. Only new customers, who had not learnt that the rules were different here, jostled and cursed.

Now the teachers-turned-shops girls have gone to become governesses abroad. Sergei, a former miner, has taken over and is always obliging, even when he is exhausted. He treats each customer as an individual.

"We have so many problems in Russia," he says. "Why should we make things even more difficult by being nasty to each other?"

In the midst of economic crisis, the philosophy has paid off. While other supermarkets have gone to the wall, customers have remained loyal to the friendly mini-mart. They may not realise it but, by their small acts of decency, the staff of this corner shop are changing the world.

HELEN WOMACK

reliable (rɪˈlaɪəbəl) adj. able to be trusted; dependable.
—re-liability or re-liableness n.

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BUSINESS

BRIEFING

Rise in house prices slows down

HOUSE PRICES are rising at their slowest annual rate for more than two years, according to the Nationwide's monthly house price index. Seasonally adjusted figures showed the average house price rising by just 0.1 per cent in November. Annual house price inflation is running at 6.9 per cent, its lowest level since September 1996.

Nationwide said the figure represented a 6 per cent drop on the 14 per cent peak recorded in the first three months of the year.

"Much of the recent slowdown has been due to the fall in consumer confidence since mid-year, rather than an inability on the part of housebuyers to enter the market," said David Parry, divisional director of the society.

Halifax said its own index of house prices, published today, was likely to show "a very small rise or even a slight fall" in house prices. This was because in October, Halifax recorded a 1.2 per cent rise in prices - now thought to be a freak result.

RJB secures £1.4bn contract



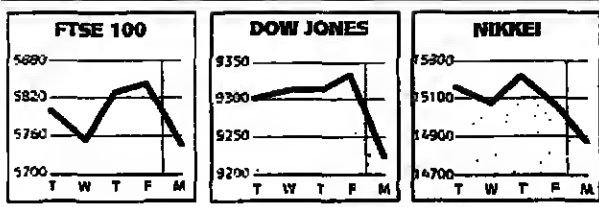
RJB, BRITAIN'S biggest coal producer (led by chief executive Richard Budge, left), last night secured a £1.4bn deal to supply 50 million tonnes of coal to Eastern Group, Britain's third biggest generator, over the next 10 years.

Eastern, which has already contracted to buy 12 million tonnes over the next three years, has agreed to take a further 18 million tonnes between now and 2003 and an extra 21 million tonnes between 2003 and 2009, provided it gets permission to fit environmental clean-up kit to its West Burton station in Nottinghamshire. The agreement will increase RJB's annual supplies to Eastern from 4 million to 7 million tonnes over the next three years.

Consumer credit still growing

CONSUMER CREDIT increased by £1.2bn in October. This was slightly down on the previous month but still growing at a robust annual rate of 17.2 per cent, according to Bank of England figures yesterday. Mortgage lending rose £2.1bn, also little changed compared with September, while the number of new loan approvals rose by 6,000 to 86,000. The figures were stronger than analysts had expected. There is little sign yet of a downturn in consumer borrowing as the economy slows.

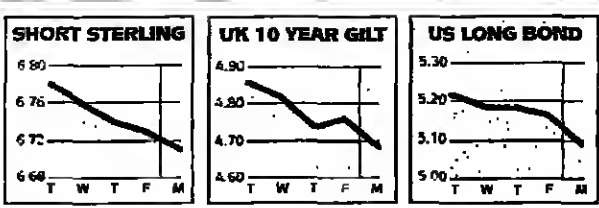
STOCK MARKETS



INDICES

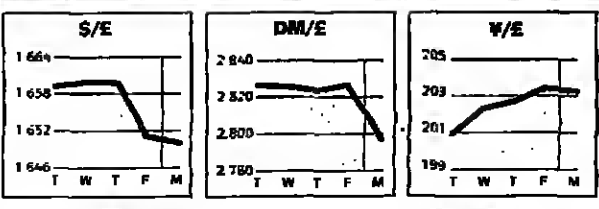
Index	Close	Change	Change (%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield (%)
FTSE 100	5743.90	-100.30	-1.72	6183.70	4599.20	3.27
FTSE 250	4901.70	-24.30	-0.49	5970.00	4247.00	4.71
FTSE 350	2721.60	-42.00	-1.52	2968.10	2210.40	3.49
FTSE All Share	2626.86	-38.94	-1.46	2886.52	2143.53	3.54
FTSE SmallCap	2065.00	-5.90	-0.29	2793.80	1634.40	4.07
FTSE Pledging	1140.10	-2.40	-0.21	1517.00	1046.00	0.00
FTSE AIM	816.30	2.20	0.27	1146.90	761.30	0.00
FTSE EBLIC 100	962.93	-26.62	-2.69	1111.00	761.30	0.00
Dow Jones	9221.60	-113.03	-1.21	9380.20	7400.30	1.62
NIKKEI	14883.70	-185.89	-1.23	17352.00	12787.00	0.98
Hank Seng	10402.37	-389.79	-3.16	11926.16	6544.79	3.01
Dax	5027.70	-98.78	-1.93	6217.00	3893.00	1.77

INTEREST RATES



Index	3 months	6 months	1 year	10 year	Yr. Chg.	Long Bond	Yr. Chg.
UK	6.88	-0.87	6.38	-1.55	4.69	-1.81	4.40
US	5.28	-0.62	5.13	-0.89	4.74	-1.41	5.09
Japan	0.42	-0.18	0.50	-0.17	1.09	-0.88	1.77
Germany	3.65	-0.11	3.46	-0.63	4.00	-1.46	4.83

CURRENCIES



Index	at Spot	Change	Yr. Ago	at Spot	Change	Yr. Ago
Dollar	1.6496	-0.31c	1.6451	1.6496	-0.31c	1.6451
D-Mark	2.7964	-3.39p	2.8743	2.7964	-3.39p	2.8743
Yen	203.10	+0.33	215.94	203.10	+0.33	215.94
E index	101.60	+0.00	105.00	101.60	+0.00	105.00

OTHER INDICATORS

Index	Close	Chg	Yr. Ago	Index	Close	Chg	Yr. Ago
Brent Oil (\$)	10.30	-0.44	18.97	GDP	115.40	3.00	112.04
Gold (\$)	293.75	-2.45	3.30	RPI	164.30	3.10	159.55
Silver (\$)	4.93	-0.01	5.30	Base Rates	6.75	7.25	

TOURIST RATES

Country	Rate	Country	Rate
Australia (\$)	2.5261	Mexican (nuevo peso)	14.97
Austria (schillings)	19.29	Netherlands (guilders)	3.0940
Belgium (francs)	56.72	New Zealand (\$)	2.9991
Canada (\$)	2.4745	Norway (krone)	12.16
Cyprus (pounds)	0.8063	Portugal (escudos)	279.36
Denmark (krone)	10.49	Saudi Arabia (rials)	6.0224
Finland (markka)	8.3718	Singapore (\$)	2.6062
France (francs)	9.2193	Spain (pesetas)	233.45
Germany (marks)	2.7590	South Africa (rand)	9.0878
Greece (drachma)	461.91	Sweden (krone)	13.19
Hong Kong (\$)	12.41	Switzerland (francs)	2.2732
Ireland (pounds)	1.1013	Thailand (bahts)	54.76
India (rupees)	63.33	Turkey (liras)	481.597
Israel (shekels)	6.4082	USA (\$)	1.6145
Italy (lira)	2731		
Japan (yen)	200.39		
Malaysia (ringgits)	6.0224		
Malta (lira)	0.6126		

Rates for information purposes only
Source: Thomas Cook

Turmoil as Shell and Texaco abandon alliance

THE OIL SECTOR was thrown into fresh turmoil yesterday after Shell and Texaco abandoned plans to merge their downstream European operations, and reports suggested that the French oil groups Elf Aquitaine and Total are to form an alliance with Petrofina of Belgium.

The decision by Shell and Texaco to scrap their joint venture in manufacturing and

BY MICHAEL HARRISON

marketing of oil products prompted speculation that the two groups could be lining up full merger partners following the BP-Amoco deal and the impending Exxon-Mobil merger.

Shell would have had an 88 per cent stake in the venture with Texaco, which was announced in September, and

would have covered both refining and petrol retailing throughout Europe.

The merger would have created a business with 16,000 petrol stations, including more than 1,500 in Britain - 19 refineries and 16 lubrication plants.

In a statement, the two companies said they had ended talks on forming an alliance after deciding it would not

maximise shareholder value. A Shell spokesman added that several areas of concern had been identified on the part of both companies but he declined to elaborate on what these were.

Shell said that the failure of the Texaco alliance would not affect its own European rationalisation programme, which will result in 3,000 job losses and the closure of four head-

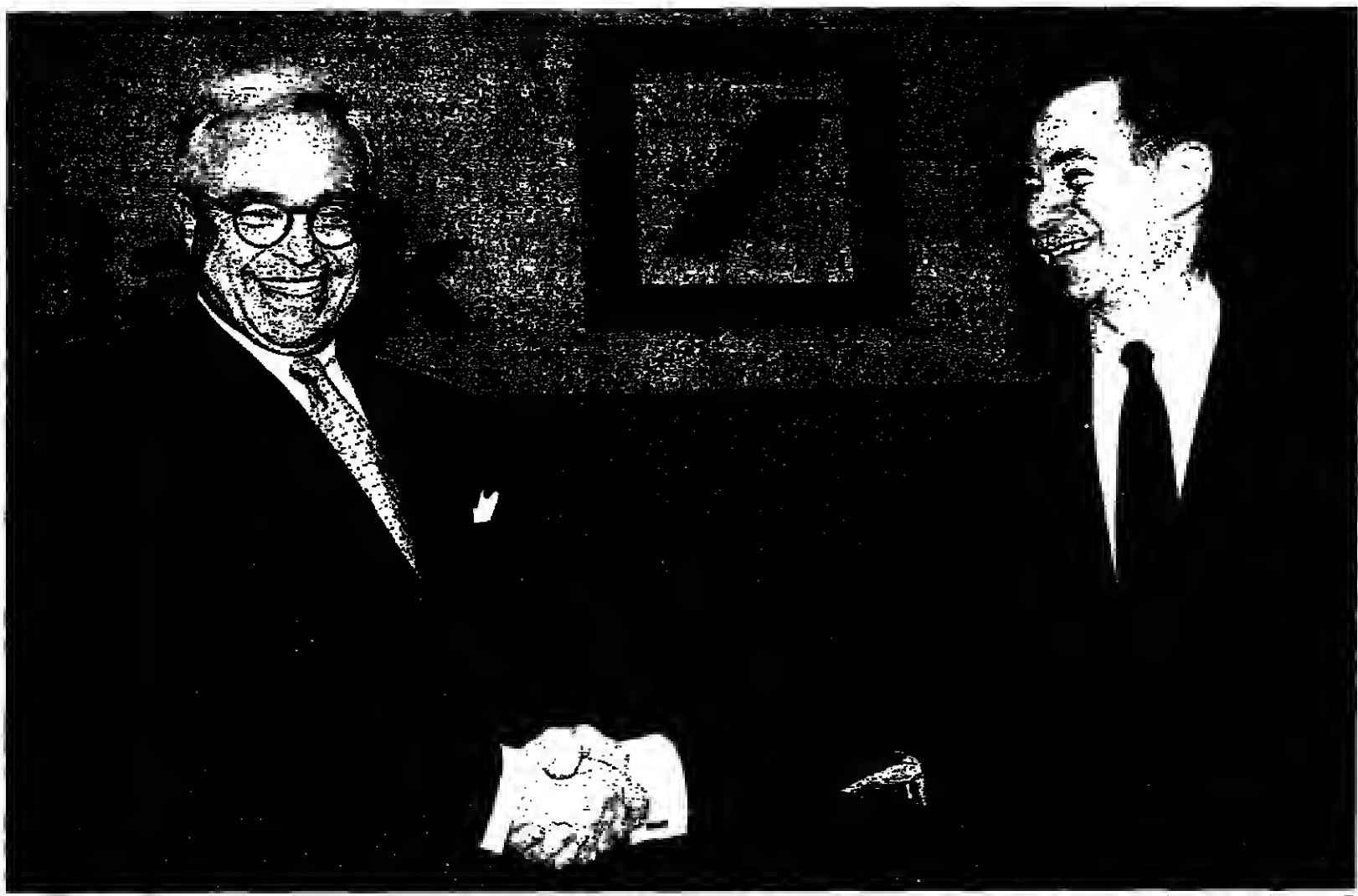
quarters offices - including Shell Mex House in London. Nor would it affect Shell's existing venture with Texaco in the United States.

Meanwhile, shares in both Total and Elf made strong gains on the Paris bourse amid speculation that they were poised for a tie-up with Petrofina. Total was up 3.5 per cent and Elf 1.5 per cent.

The rise followed a report in

Belgium saying that the financier Albert Frere was close to selling his 30 per cent stake in the Belgian oil group following weekend negotiations with Elf and Total.

Shares in Petrofina were suspended pending a statement while Total is due to issue a statement this morning following a meeting of its supervisory board yesterday evening.



Rolf Breuer (left), chairman of Deutsche Bank, shaking hands with Frank Newman, chairman of Bankers Trust, in Frankfurt yesterday AP

Deutsche-Bankers deal threatens 3,000 City jobs

THERE WERE fears yesterday that up to 3,000 jobs could go in the City after Deutsche Bank unveiled a \$10bn merger with Bankers Trust of America to create the world's biggest bank.

Speaking at a news conference in Frankfurt to announce the deal, Deutsche Bank chief executive Rolf Breuer said that 5,500 staff will be cut, with the axe falling mainly in London and New York.

The jobs cut could be the biggest the City has seen, eclipsing the 2,500 jobs lost in the City following last year's merger between Union Bank of Switzerland and Swiss Bank Corporation - at the time the largest European banking merger ever seen.

The cuts which were far larger than staff had been led to expect will be spread evenly between global fixed income, global equity, domestic equity and support services, including IT and personnel. There will be no cuts in Germany.

Mr Breuer denied the bank was planning to favour staff at Deutsche which employs 6,000 in London over those at Bankers Trust, which has 2,500, many former NatWest Markets staff employed under the BT Alex Brown umbrella.

Deutsche said that it plans a one-off charge of \$1.2bn to cover severance payments. In addition it will set aside \$400m for golden handouts to lock in staff who they fear might walk. That raises the total cost of the acquisition to \$1.7bn.

The \$10bn headline figure includes \$600m to cover the cost of buying out Bankers Trust's executive option scheme.

Deutsche plans a 4bn German mark rights issue to fund the deal. The bank also says that it will raise unspecified amounts from the issue of bonds, convertible warrants, assets sales and the sale of warrants convertible into shares held by Deutsche Bank in other companies including DaimlerChrysler, the auto giant and Allianz the German insurer.

Dr Breuer said that the merger would lead to savings of \$1bn a year from 2001. Return on equity would rise from 22.2 per cent now to at least 26 per cent in 2001.

The deal will create the

BY ANDREW GARFIELD
Financial Editor

largest bank in the world with a balance sheet of \$834bn, \$688bn of assets under management and 96,442 staff.

The deal fulfils Deutsche's longstanding ambition to acquire a sizeable presence in the US. But it falls short of achieving Deutsche's ultimate dream of breaking into the charmed circle of so-called bulge bracket banks which dominate Wall Street.

Bankers Trust has a strong corporate lending business and has a large presence in bonds and foreign exchange but it has been badly hit by the recent financial crisis and is still trying to put together a credible merger and acquisitions advisory business out of a string of acquisitions, including NatWest markets in the UK and Alex

Brown and Wolfensohn in the US. Analysts said that both banks have been dealing with weak hands. In the third quarter, when the emerging markets crisis was at its worst, Bankers slumped to a loss of \$488m while Deutsche's investment banking business made just \$41m.

Dr Breuer brushed aside the critics yesterday: "Bankers Trust was an excellent fit. It was our first and best choice."

However, senior Deutsche executives have made little secret of their hope that once this deal is integrated Deutsche will be in a strong position to make a further acquisition - this time of top tier firm like Morgan Stanley or Merrill Lynch.

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Rugby cuts jobs after profits warning

RUGBY GROUP the UK building materials supplier, yesterday said it was cutting 400 jobs at its Doncaster and Gloucester plants and warned that poor trading conditions and competition from cheap imports were eroding profits.

Although the company had indicated a slowdown in demand earlier in the year, the news took the City by surprise, with the share price tumbling

by as much as 15 per cent during the day, before closing 8 per cent down at 82p.

Rugby, which employs 3,300 people, commenced formal talks with unions yesterday, and said it hoped to have completed the redundancies by the new year.

The company added that "the decline in the UK market that began to emerge in the second quarter of the year has continued into the second half. As a result, UK joinery profitability has not shown the improvement expected".

Rugby, whose primary activity is the manufacturing of wooden building products, has been affected by the general slowdown in the UK housing sector. There has also been a shift in demand, with consumers moving away from traditional wooden windows and doors, towards PVC products.

The strength of sterling has given a boost to imports, with Rugby losing significant market share to cheaper Latin American producers.

BY SIMON DUKE

The company also said that the cessation of its contract with the Jewson/Harcros retailing chain had hit profits. It is believed that Rugby decided not

to renew the £40m contract due to price demands, which would have resulted in Rugby losing money on the deal.

Plans to make good this loss in revenue had not been as successful as expected, according to the statement.

Analysts have slashed profit forecasts by £10m to £73m, and believe that the redundancies will cost the company £5m.

Even if the bid is ruled on in Brussels the electricity regulator, Offer, still has to approve the transfer of London Electricity's licence to EdF, giving the UK authorities the chance to extract concessions.

Outlook, page 17

AROUND THE WORLD'S MARKETS

LONDON

SHARES CLOSED sharply lower yesterday, after a weak opening on Wall Street sparked a late round of profit-taking and pushed Footsie back below the 5,800 barrier.

The FTSE-100 index ended the day 110.5 lower at 5743.9, mirroring the Dow's opening loss. The smaller indices proved more resilient. The Mid Cap finished 24.3 lower at 4901.7, while the Small Cap fell 5.9 to 2065.0. Speculation of corporate activity and positive analysts' comment on Kingfisher sent the retail giant over 5 per cent higher. Market Report, page 21

NEW YORK

STOCKS pulled back from record levels in light trading, as investors took a more cautious view of the economy and stock market. At midday the Dow Jones was down 115 points to 9,217 while Nasdaq, where many technology stocks trade, fell 31 points or 1.56 per cent to 1,985. Earlier, heavy selling of Internet stocks had sent it down by more than 2 per cent.

US Treasuries were up sharply as some assets were reallocated from stocks, with the benchmark 30-year Treasury bond up a full point, to yield 5.10 at midday.

TOKYO

THE NIKKEI fell 185.69 points, or 1.23 per cent, to close at 14,883.70 in light trading as technical dealers tried to push the market low enough to fill a price gap of roughly 125 points, created after Japanese markets were closed on 23 November while overseas markets traded.

The gap starts at 14,779.94 and ends at 14,904.20. "On a day when there's very little fundamental news, the gap tends to get focused on," said a trader. Sega Enterprises rose over 3 per cent after reporting its new 128-bit Dreamcast game player sold out.

PARIS

THERE WAS a late hard landing with the CAC-40 index closing down 2.72 per cent at 3,843.38, off an intra-day high of 3,983, as profit-taking in US stocks sparked selling amid stocks boosted by merger rumours. Oil stocks Total and Elf Aquitaine shed early gains made on reports either was seeking a stake in Belgian petrochemicals company Petrofina. Rhone-Poulenc closed down 3.24 per cent after it and Germany's Hoechst confirmed they would hold a joint news conference today in Strasbourg.

FRANKFURT

THE XETRA DAX index closed down 133.07 points, or 2.58 per cent, at 5,026.14 as the dollar gave way, slipping almost two pennies, and Wall Street began trading down. Traders said the euphoria over the recent spate of mergers was winding down. The floor DAX fell 1.93 per cent to 5,022.70, while the dollar was holding above DM1.69 after starting the day above DM1.71. A weaker dollar cuts German exporters' earnings when they convert dollars to marks and makes their goods more expensive abroad.

Two also-rans don't make a winner

IST Tautonic determination which is driving Deutsche Bank, or just empire-building madness? Morgan Grenfell was one of the top merchant banks in the City when Deutsche took it over in the late 1980s. Nobody would recognise it as that today, despite the hundreds of millions of pounds poured into it and the capital put behind it.

It hasn't all been Deutsche Bank's fault, but a once great City house has been reduced to an also-ran. Even its name has been largely erased from the landscape. Rather than seeing this debacle for what it is – a cock-up of considerable proportions – Deutsche blames it on Morgan Grenfell being too small to compete, particularly in the all-important US investment banking market. To correct the position, it is now buying Bankers Trust, which at least has the merit of already being an also-ran, both in the UK and the US.

Will two also-rans make a top dog? It hasn't so far worked at Warburg Dillon Read, which is still in a state of profound post-surgical shock after last year's merger with UBS. The pain of this latest City merger is likely to be even worse. Obviously, for employees there is nothing other than a P45 in these huge con-



OUTLOOK

solidating mergers, while it goes without saying that clients and customers rarely gain a dime. But it is not clear that shareholders get anything out of them either, long term. Deutsche reckons that tradeable securities are now so much a part of global banking that it cannot be a serious bank without an investment banking presence. Just try that one on Sir Brian Pitman, chairman of Lloyds TSB.

Taylor/Barclays

IF IT WAS not apparent to the Barclays board on Friday that Martin Taylor's shock resignation as chief

executive would plunge the bank into crisis, it must be by now. The more that becomes known about Mr Taylor's progressive alienation from his fellow directors, the more shambolic and worrying the situation at Barclays appears.

Obviously the bank is not about to go under, and indeed, compared to the same stage of the last cycle, Barclays seems operationally to be in good shape. What the management crisis has exposed, however, is a corporate governance issue of scandalous proportions. By the end, the number of executives on the board involved in day-to-day management amounted to just three, including Mr Taylor. The rest of the board seems to be largely comprised of friends of Andrew Buxton, the chairman.

At least three of these, including Mr Buxton, are there on a virtually full-time "executive" basis, yet apart from drawing large salaries and occupying big offices, with corresponding secretarial back-up, it's hard to know what their purpose is.

One thing that directors in this position do is scheme, meddle and stop the chief executive doing what he wants to do. Mr Taylor found himself blocked at every turn. His

board suspected him of leaking to the press to bulldoze his proposals through, he suspected them of leaking in order to undermine him.

With Sir Andrew Large's elevation into another "phantom" executive position last May, the situation became untenable. Sir Andrew behaved like a corporate commissar, double checking the chief executive's every move and arranging his own independent meetings with management and advisers.

Sir Andrew's manoeuvrings so alienated other senior executives that when the job as chief executive did become vacant, he was passed over in favour of a compromise candidate, Sir Peter Middleton. Sir Andrew may have succeeded in finally driving Mr Taylor out, but he put paid to his own chances in the process.

The board's apparent failure to deal with these warring factions is had enough. A more serious charge is that the board stood between Mr Taylor and the pursuit of shareholder value. Mr Taylor believed strongly that Barclays Capital, the bank's investment banking arm, had become a drag on the company's stock valuation.

This in turn meant that the re-

tail bank was prevented from pursuing an appropriate consolidating merger – with, say, Halifax – on advantageous terms. The way forward was therefore to sell or hive off Barclays Capital, possibly in conjunction with the rest of the bank's corporate business.

The rest of the board thought this approach too radical: several directors believed a bank of Barclays' stature must in any case have an investment banking arm. To some extent it became a vestiges of empire versus shareholder value argument. But it was also an us and him thing. Mr Taylor never entirely fitted. The City must make up its own mind on who was right, but certainly what remains of the board seems to lack any kind of coherent alternative strategy.

A corporate finance solution to the management and strategy vacuum would still seem like the best outcome. George Mathewson, chief executive of Royal Bank of Scotland, would for one gladly reverse his bank into Barclays if he could manage it out of Edinburgh. So would Halifax. But having blocked so much else, the board is undoubtedly too proud to consider anything of the sort. After all, there are those salaries to defend.

French electricity

THE FRENCH have succeeded in stitching up both British Energy and the European Commission to win the auction for London Electricity. But whether the Trade and Industry Secretary Peter Mandelson will be so easily outflanked remains to be seen.

First British Energy Electricite de France agreed to remain in the auction for London on condition that its owners, Entergy of the US, paid it a "break fee" if the business was sold to the only other bidder left in the race, British Energy. This break fee was equivalent to 2-4 per cent of the eventual bid price, meaning that in order to match the French offer, British Energy would have had no option but to overpay.

Knowing that Entergy was desperate to have the money its hands as soon as possible, EdF twisted the knife a bit further by making its bid unconditional on regulatory clearance. This is where the Commission comes in. Under EC rules, a bidder can be fined heavily for making an offer unconditional before Brussels has had an opportunity to vet the deal. However, EdF secured a dis-

pensation from the EC – the first such occasion this has occurred – allowing it to bid unconditionally without fear of punishment.

This does not automatically mean the deal will be cleared by Brussels. But having given EdF a dispensation, it would be odd if the EC decided then to block the takeover.

Will Mr Mandelson be so well disposed towards the French? Unlike previous foreign takeovers in the electricity sector, this bid raises concerns for two reasons. First, EdF itself cannot be taken over because it is state-owned. Second, this deal amounts to vertical integration because EdF already supplies 7 per cent of the UK market through the interconnector from France.

Mr Mandelson is not too impressed by the fact that the interconnector only runs one way. As for back-door renationalisation of London, that would never have been allowed under the Lilley doctrine. But remember this is new Labour and Mr Mandelson is its most ardent advocate of privatisation. Brussels may keep the right to vet the merger, but EdF has to rely on the British authorities to transfer London's licence. EdF could he unstitched yet.

Barclays hawks urged dismissal for Taylor

AT LEAST one Barclays director called for chief executive Martin Taylor to be fired as chief executive on Thursday night after Mr Taylor informed the board that he intended to resign with immediate effect, it emerged yesterday.

At a tense meeting on Thursday night some board members argued that given his refusal to stay on to give Barclays time to find a successor a statement should be put out saying that Mr Taylor had been dismissed with immediate effect. However, the hawks on the board backed down after consultation with both Barclays lawyers and lawyers acting for Mr Taylor.

The angry boardroom scenes came after Sir Nigel Mobbs, the senior non-executive called in to deal with the crisis, asked Mr Taylor over lunch on Wednesday to stay on until a succession plan could be put in place.

The tension between Mr Tay-

BY ANDREW GARFIELD
Financial Editor

lor and his board goes back at least two years, but was brought to a head by a row at the October board meeting over the former chief executive's proposals to demerge the bank's corporate and retail operations.

Other board members have rounded on Sir Andrew Large, deputy chairman, criticising him for compounding the difficulties on the board by seeking to get involved with day-to-day management decisions that were not properly his responsibility.

With relations deteriorating, Mr Taylor agreed two months ago to the appointment of Spencer Stuart as outside headhunters to examine alternative candidates for his job.

Sir Peter Middleton, who stepped into the breach, will be spending most of the week talking to shareholders who



Sir Nigel Mobbs, non-executive director at Barclays, who asked Martin Taylor to stay on as chief executive until a succession plan could be put in place; Mr Taylor's refusal angered the board

have been unsettled by the recent events. Barclays' board is due to meet in two weeks to put together the outlines of a strategy for rebuilding confidence in the bank.

As the search for Mr Taylor's replacement began, Chris Lendrum, the head of Barclays' UK corporate banking business has emerged as the internal front-runner to take over as

chief executive from Martin Taylor who quit the bank in dramatic fashion last Friday.

Senior Barclays executives have said that they would prefer to look outside the bank. Among the more plausible names being put forward yesterday were Peter Burt, the well-regarded chief executive of the Bank of Scotland, Peter White, chief executive of Al-

liance & Leicester and Martin Gray, head of retail at NatWest.

However, industry insiders say the dearth of obvious candidates for the job may lead the board to settle for the option of an internal promotion after all.

Mr Lendrum, who joined the main board in June, is a career Barclays man who came up through the same central planning route as Malcolm

Williamson who went on to run Standard Chartered, the UK quoted Asian bank.

Analysts have suggested a management buy-in by Alliance & Leicester or even Bank of Scotland might be the solution. But the idea was dismissed as "laughable" by Barclays insiders. One said: "It is a ridiculous and highly risky way to get yourself a new chief executive."

Vickers buys Olso marine firm for £380m

VICKERS, the defence and engineering group, yesterday announced the £380m takeover of a Norwegian marine engineering business, its first major deal since selling off the luxury car maker Rolls-Royce to Volkswagen.

The acquisition of the Oslo-based group Ulstein will turn Vickers into one of the world's leading manufacturers of marine propulsion systems and signifies a further shift in emphasis away from its traditional tank business.

Vickers is paying £304m in cash for all of Ulstein's businesses apart from its shipbuilding division. It is also assuming £42m in debt and will incur further transaction and restructuring costs of around £30m. There will also be a goodwill write-off of more than £200m.

The purchase price represents a premium of more than 200 per cent to Ulstein's price before takeover talks were disclosed last week, prompting concern among analysts that Vickers has overpaid.

Vickers, which raised £470m from the Rolls sale, will also

BY MICHAEL HARRISON

have net debt following the takeover, although it said the deal would be earnings enhancing and, at worst, interest cover would be covered at least five times by earnings.

Baron Byssse, Vickers' chief executive, defended the price being paid for Ulstein by saying the combined business would be a world leader. The takeover could result in some rationalisation of capacity in Edinburgh, where Ulstein and Vickers' own marine propulsion business, Kamewa, both have facilities.

The combined business will have sales of £500m and more than 2,300 employees. Mr Byssse said he did not foresee any difficulties with European competition authorities over market dominance.

The move by Vickers to deepen its involvement in marine engineering prompted speculation that it may dispose of its Challenger 2 tank business, either by selling it to a US buyer like United Defense or merging it with the new GKN-Alvis joint venture in fighting vehicles.

Notice to customers of Halifax International (Isle of Man) Limited.

Halifax International (Isle of Man) Limited announces revised interest rates effective from 1st December 1998.

BALANCE	ANNUAL INTEREST GROSS PA. (PREVIOUS)	ANNUAL INTEREST GROSS PA. (FROM 01/12/98)	MONTHLY INTEREST GROSS PA. (FROM 01/12/98)
HALIFAX INTERNATIONAL GOLD 90			
£100,000+	7.70%	7.15%	6.93%
£50,000+	7.65%	7.10%	6.88%
£25,000+	7.40%	6.90%	6.69%
£10,000+	7.00%	6.50%	6.31%
HALIFAX INTERNATIONAL GOLD			
£100,000+	7.35%	6.80%	6.60%
£50,000+	7.15%	6.60%	6.41%
£25,000+	7.05%	6.55%	6.36%
£10,000+	6.60%	6.10%	5.94%
£5,000+	6.05%	5.55%	5.41%
£500+	4.45%	3.95%	3.88%

If you have less than £10,000 in your Halifax International Gold 90 account it will earn interest at the equivalent Halifax International Gold rate. If you have less than £500 in your Halifax International Gold 90 or Halifax International Gold account we will only pay interest at 1.00% gross p.a. "Gross" means we will not take any tax off the interest we pay. The accounts shown above are not available to residents of the Isle of Man.

Further details can be obtained by calling Halifax International (Isle of Man) Limited on 01624 612323 (from within the UK) or 44 1624 612323 (from outside the UK).



1st December 1998

HALIFAX INTERNATIONAL (ISLE OF MAN) LIMITED IS REGISTERED WITH THE ISLE OF MAN FINANCIAL SUPERVISION COMMISSION FOR BANKING AND INVESTMENT BUSINESS. BRANCH AND REGISTERED OFFICE: PO BOX 30, 67 STRAND STREET, DOUGLAS, ISLE OF MAN, IM2 1TA. REGISTERED IN THE ISLE OF MAN. NO. 062891C.

IN BRIEF

Rexam bids £380m for Swedish packaging giant

REXAM, the UK's second-largest maker of food containers and beverage cans, has bid 7.77bn kronor (£380m) for Sweden's largest consumer packaging company, PLM. Rexam, whose chief executive Rolf Boerjesson led PLM until 1996, will assume debt of Kr2.64bn. PLM spokesman Per Erlandsson said the board would probably decide on the bid at its next meeting 8 December. PLM has 20 per cent of the European beverage can market.

Midshires deadline for votes

BIRMINGHAM MIDSHIRES has made a final call to members to send in their votes on the £750m Halifax takeover offer. Proxy voting forms on the deal must be returned by midnight next Tuesday. Midshires is offering preference shares worth £400 each to the majority of members. For the bid to be accepted, more than 50 per cent of all savers, and a majority of borrowers voting, must vote in favour.

Uno shares dive 15 per cent

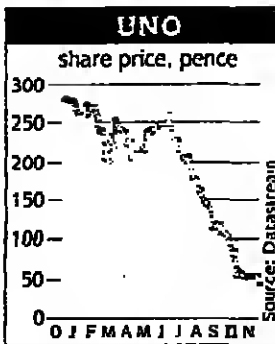
SHARES in Uno, the furniture retailer, shed 15 per cent of their value yesterday as the company revealed same store sales in the 28 weeks to 7 November had fallen by 11.6 per cent year-on-year. Uno said the traditionally quiet first half would show a "significant loss". Analysts have cut full-year profit forecasts from £4.75m to £2.75m. Separately, Fine Art Developments, the home shopping company, warned it expects a "material reduction" in profits this year due to lower margins, higher pension costs and millennium compliance costs.

NTT offer for Europe

EUROPEAN investors are to be allowed to buy up to 175,000 shares in NTT, the Japanese telecoms giant, when the Japanese government sells 1 million shares – a 6 per cent stake – in the group later this month. Roughly two-thirds of the shares are reserved for Japanese investors, while the remainder will be offered in the US.

Lord Wolfson

THE photograph which accompanied yesterday's article on Great Universal Stores was incorrect. The picture showed Lord Wolfson of Marylebone. The chairman of GUS is Lord Wolfson of Sunningdale. We apologise for the error.



HSBC Midland Bank

Notice to cardholders

Midland Bank announces the following decrease in its interest rates. Effective from (and including) 1 January 1999.

Midland MasterCard/Visa, Combined & Student Accounts

Up to and including 31/12/98 1.61%

1/1/99 onwards 1.54%

• Terms & Conditions will be varied accordingly with effect from the date above

Standard
Monthly
Interest
rate

HSBC is the marketing name of Midland Bank plc.

Tuesday 1 December 199

Notice
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News Analysis: A levy on Eurobonds would send the trade to New York, opponents say



The City of London dominates the \$2 trillion Eurobond market. A withholding tax would simply mean institutions channelling business elsewhere, lobbyists claim

City takes a stand on Euro-tax

THE CITY'S flourishing Eurobond market seems an unlikely source of political controversy, but today its future will be top of the agenda when European finance ministers meet in Brussels.

Eurobonds were of limited interest to those outside the Square Mile until the European Commission stepped in with controversial plans to impose a new tax on bonds issued in the EU.

In the City it is now feared that the Commission's plans to impose a withholding tax on investment income could destroy this \$2 trillion market, which the City of London dominates. The Corporation of London, which is lobbying aggressively against the imposition of the new tax, warns that the Eurobond trade could be forced from London to New York, putting up to 10,000 City jobs at risk.

Under the Commission's proposals, all EU member states would have to choose between two options when looking at the interest that non-residents earn on investment income.

The first is to provide the non-residents' home tax authority with detailed information on revenue flows, thus enabling the home tax authority to levy the appropriate tax.

BY LEA PATERSON

The second is to levy a 20 per cent minimum withholding tax on interest paid to non-residents - which is the route most institutions would be likely to take.

The Commission says these proposals would eliminate "unfair" tax competition between member states, thus ensuring that money did not flow to, say, Luxembourg from Germany simply because of the differing tax regimes.

Many European countries, the UK included, already have some type of withholding tax in place. Most banks pay interest on income net of tax, for example. Indeed, the idea of taxing income as close to its source as possible has long been advocated by academics

- it helps crack down on tax avoidance. So if the Commission's proposals simply extend this regime to all European countries, what is all the fuss about?

The main difficulty is that the Commission's proposals, as they stand at present, will affect wholesale financial markets that are currently exempt from the withholding tax.

Individuals from outside the UK, for example, who currently receive income from Eurobonds issued in London, will suddenly see sharp falls in the interest. As a result, they will demand higher returns from Eurobonds if they are going to hold them in preference to other financial instruments. This in turn, makes it more expensive for companies to issue

debt in Europe, forcing them to look elsewhere.

As Judith Mayhew of the Corporation of London puts it: "The main difficulty is that until the US adopts such a tax then it is easy for global financial institutions to move part of the Eurobond market to New York."

Bill Robinson, a former director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies and now a director of London Economics, the consultancy, says: "The world these days is a global village. Tax revenue equals tax rate times tax base. There's no point raising the tax rate if the tax base is simply going to shrink."

Professor Richard Dale of the University of Southampton, author of a recent study of the effect of regulation in the financial markets commissioned by the Corporation of London, agrees. He says: "It is well established that financial regulatory initiatives implemented in one national jurisdiction may cause financial activity to shift to other, more permissive, jurisdictions."

However, proponents of the Commission's proposals point out that they will only apply to individuals, not companies. Individuals only hold around 10 per cent of all Eurobonds - so the bulk of the market will be unaffected. And although there have

been attempts by some MEPs to extend the scope of the tax to companies, this is seen as highly unlikely by senior sources.

Those who oppose the Commission's moves counter that financial markets only work if they are deep and they are liquid.

Ms Mayhew, for example, argues that the main attraction of London is the depth of its financial markets - the consequences of tampering with this competitive advantage could be disastrous.

Historical experience seems to support the view that in financial markets, size matters. The recent experience of Life - which took the whole of the market for German government bond futures to Frankfurt within months because of its reluctance to introduce electronic trading - still smartens with many in the City.

Professor Dale's study also provides real-life evidence to back up those who oppose the imposition of the tax in the wholesale financial markets. Until 1984, for example, the US imposed a 30 per cent withholding tax on income paid by US issuers to non-resident investors. The result, according to the study, was to help kick-start the Eurodollar bond market, now key to the financial

health of the City and other European financial centres.

In late 1987, the German government proposed a new 10 per cent withholding tax on domestic bonds, to come into effect in 1989. The results were nothing short of spectacular. In 1988, just before the tax was due to come in, DM9bn flowed out of German bonds, and the market came under severe pressure. In April 1989, four months after the tax had come into force, the government was forced into an embarrassing U-turn.

There seems to be a broad consensus among academics and the City alike that the extension of a withholding tax to Europe's wholesale financial markets will cause institutions to channel business elsewhere, and that jobs - not just in London but across Europe - will go.

The high-profile lobbying conducted by the City seems to be having some impact. The Government has said it will not jeopardise the City's future prospects. The UK's opposition to the plans is gathering support in Europe. There are moves afoot by MEPs to propose that the Eurobond market be exempt from the tax. If they fail, the argument goes, then it is not only London's financial markets, but Europe as a whole that will suffer.

Allders warns of slow start to Christmas

ALLDERS, the department store retailer, yesterday warned of a slow start to Christmas and said it was already making cutbacks in the face of weak consumer demand.

Reporting a 16 per cent fall in profits to £19.4m, in line with a profits warning in August, Allders said it had made 60 staff redundant in the last two months and delayed the hiring of Christmas staff by a month to reduce costs. The company is also considering cutting its marketing budget for next year.

Reporting a 3.7 per cent fall in same-store sales in the last eight weeks, Allders said only a handful of departments had recorded sales gains. Beds were the best performer with a rise in sales of just 2 per cent. Lingerie, linen and menswear showed marginal gains.

Other departments have been hammered, with personal computer sales down by 50 per cent because of fierce competition. Allders has reduced the amount of floor space devoted to PCs and is likely to pull out of the sector completely this year. "Dixons has been doing well and there are new entrants like Tesco and Asda,"

By NIGEL COPE
Associate City Editor

said Allders' chief executive, Harvey Lipsith. "The competition is phenomenal and long-term we don't see a future for us in that market."

Mr Lipsith said he thought Christmas would be "late", with shoppers leaving their purchases until the last minute but he was optimistic about the January sales. "I think 1999 is going to be a tough year but I don't think it's going to get any worse."

Allders has 38 stores spread across the country, including 18 branches of Allders at Home, which specialises in household goods. Mr Lipsith said the southern stores had performed no better than those in the north, which has been hit by a weakening manufacturing sector.

Allders said the year began well but sales drifted downwards after June as interest rates edged higher. Trading was also disrupted by a refurbishment programme and the relaunch of the seven former Maples stores acquired in September last year for £3.8m. The shares closed 3p lower at 93.5p.

Atkins is worried about P&O stake

WS ATKINS, the consultant engineer in talks to buy the construction group Bovis from P&O, warned yesterday that having the transport group as a major shareholder could be a disadvantage, writes Francesco Guerrera.

Under the proposed terms of the Bovis sale, P&O would receive up to £350m in cash and a stake of up to 15 per cent in WS Atkins, becoming the single largest shareholder in the highly rated engineer.

However, the WS Atkins chief executive Mike Jeffries said that leaving such a large holding in the hands of P&O could increase volatility in the share price.

"The disadvantage is that this is quite a big block of shares in the hand of one shareholder with other interests. So if there was a downturn P&O might want to offload it," he said. He added that a sale of the stake would push down WS Atkins' share price, which has almost trebled in value since the 1996 flotation.

However, Mr Jeffries acknowledged that the presence of P&O would bolster confidence in the future of Bovis, a respected construction business with sales of over £2bn a year.

WS Atkins yesterday reported an 18 per cent rise in interim pre-tax profit to £15m on turnover up 15 per cent to £200.9m.

FSA to regulate Lloyd's

FINANCIAL regulators yesterday set out proposals for the Lloyd's of London insurance market to be regulated externally for the first time in its 300-year history, writes Andrew Verity.

The Financial Services Authority published plans to use new powers under the Financial Services and Markets Bill to avoid a repeat of huge losses in the early 1990s which nearly caused Lloyd's to collapse.

All managing agents - the companies that run the syndicates underwriting business at Lloyd's - will now have to be authorised as "fit and proper" by the FSA.

Members' agents, who liaise between the market and individual Names, will also have to be authorised, and the FSA will have powers to intervene directly when the agents break its rules.

The proposals, which are subject to consultation until March 31, seek to avert a crisis arising from big concentrations of risk and poor underwriting.

The FSA retreated from handling the day-to-day monitoring of the market - a possibility that alarmed insiders. Instead, Lloyd's will discipline wayward members while the FSA will be able to fine Lloyd's as a whole.

Go-ahead for £20bn drugs merger

BY ANDREW GARFIELD
Financial Editor

THE CHEMICALS giants Rhône-Poulenc and Hoechst will today formally announce plans to create a £20bn Franco-German pharmaceutical and agricultural group based in the historic town of Strasbourg, which has been fought over by the French and Germans for centuries.

The combined company, which is to be called Aventis, will be the largest life sciences group in the world by sales, overtaking Merck, the American drugs giant, and Glaxo-Wellcome of the UK.

The group will also be the largest agricultural group, ahead of Novartis, the Swiss giant. In structuring the deal, the Germans appear to have bent over backwards not to offend the French. Not only will the company be headquartered in France, but the French have won the battle to ensure that it is Jean-René Fourtou, the Rhône-Poulenc chairman and chief executive, who will head the all-powerful management board. Jürgen Dormann, the Hoechst chief executive whom the Germans had wanted to run the combined operation, will run the supervisory board.

Moreover, the new company is to be split 50:50 between Hoechst and Rhône-Poulenc, despite the fact that on current market valuations the split would work out closer to 60:40 in the Germans' favour.

Unions have already expressed concern at the level of job cuts likely to flow from the deal. The talk is that 10 per cent, or 15,000 jobs, could go.

The two companies intend to keep their separate share listings until 2001 to allow them to divest operations that do not form part of the merger plan. Hoechst announced last month it was planning to spin off industrial chemicals.

COMPANY RESULTS

Name	Turnover (£)	Pre-tax (£)	EPS	Dividend	Pay day	X-div
Adrian Associates (F)	9.25m (8.14m)	0.62m (0.33m)	0.79p (0.59p)	0.15p (0.15p)	06.01.99	01.02.99
Adrian (F)	620m (497m)	18.4m (22.1m)	17.3p (27.7p)	8.4p (8p)	06.01.99	01.02.99
Adrian (F)	201m (175.2m)	15.0m (12.7m)	10.0p (8.7p)	3.05p (2.7p)	20.04.99	01.03.99
Batherson Brewery (U)	22.15m (19.49m)	3.19m (2.79m)	11.1p (9.7p)	2.25p (2.1p)	06.01.99	07.12.98
Car UK (F)	41.2m (27.2m)	5.70m (3.54m)	10.0p (6.5p)	1.50p (0.25p)	04.12.98	07.12.98
Chelvey (F)	26.15m (23.59m)	3.505m (4.070m)	15.1p (17.2p)	5.0p (4.5p)	28.01.99	07.12.98
Diagrams (F)	112.5m (102.8m)	14.0m (11.30m)	25.3p (21.8p)	12.5p (11.5p)	20.04.99	01.03.99
Diagrams (F)	17.32m (14.5m)	7.4m (7.1m)	4.15p (4.45p)	1.25p	11.01.99	07.12.98
Diagrams of London (F)	71.2m (77.2m)	-0.07m (-13.15m)	-0.2p (-15.34p)	2.25p (2.25p)	06.01.99	07.12.98
Fin Art Investments (F)	52.3m (50.1m)	0.76m (0.89m)	0.4p (48.4p)	0.4p	16.02.99	04.01.99
Fin Art Investments (F)	125m (110m)	11.2m (12.8m)	15.8p (15.3p)	3.0p (3.4p)	06.01.99	01.03.99
Fin Art Investments (F)	4.03m (3.58m)	355m (267m)	44.5p (40.7p)	23.4p (21.4p)	06.01.99	01.03.99
Fin Art Investments (F)	19.7m (18.3m)	2.24m (2.19m)	34.7p (34.3p)	8.4p (7.75p)	12.02.99	01.03.99
Fin Art Investments (F)	5.44m (4.58m)	0.70m (0.76m)	3.25p (4.11p)	0.9p	27.01.99	07.12.98
Fin Art Investments (F)	46.1m (40.4m)	2.550m (2.422m)	10.10p (11.53p)	4.5p (5p)	26.02.99	07.12.98
Fin Art Investments (F)	25.1m (21.2m)	0.15m (0.43m)	1.2p (2.3p)	0.4p	06.01.99	07.12.98
Fin Art Investments (F)	25.85m (16.58m)	-4.37m (-0.41m)	-12.4p (9.4p)	11.30p (9.4p)	27.01.99	29.12.98
Fin Art Investments (F)	43.5m (37.4m)	0.83m (0.45m)	4.1p (3.7p)	0.5p (0.5p)	06.01.99	07.12.98
Fin Art Investments (F)	18.8m (17.2m)	5.28m (4.25m)	15.3p (14.1p)	5.0p (4.8p)	29.01.99	04.01.99

(F) - First (F) - First

*Comparative figures are on a proforma basis (profits before exceptional)

Notice to existing Barclays mortgage customers

Variable mortgage rates will change as follows:

	Old Rate	New Rate
Barclays Mortgage Rate <i>Interest charged monthly</i>	8.70%	8.20% <i>Effective from 1st December 1998</i>
Barclays Home Mortgage Rate <i>Interest charged quarterly</i>	8.70%	8.20% <i>Effective from 1st December 1998</i>

If you have any queries concerning this mortgage rate change call 0800 000 929 between 8.00am and 8.00pm, Monday to Friday, or between 10.00am and 4.00pm on Saturdays.

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Kingfisher buoyant as Footsie sinks

KINGFISHER WAS the stock market's monarch yesterday. The retail giant, which counts B&Q, Woolworths and Superdrug among its subjects, fought valiantly against Footsie's three-digit slide and was one of the few stocks still standing at the end of the day.

A note from the broker Charterhouse Tilney, which identified Kingfisher as the pick of an undervalued retail sector, sent the stock on its way. With analysts Mark Charnock and Ian McDonald musing about a "massive upside in B&Q" and saying there was "still upside in Woolworths", the stock could only go up.

The positive mood intensified after talk that chief executive Sir Geoff Mulcahy had told analysts that the venture with the French giant Castorama was on the acquisition trail. Receding fears of a bearish trading statement next week added to the bullish sentiment and an all-time record was in sight.

In the event, Kingfisher closed up 29.5p at 578p, the biggest Footsie riser of the day, but just short of its 582.5p peak.

Other retailers to benefit from

MARKET REPORT



FRANCESCO GUERRERA

Charterhouse's wisdom included Footsie candidate DIXONS, up 13p to 737p as the broker highlighted the chance of a share buyback. WH Smith, up 4p to 481p, was also favoured by the broker.

Footsie did not share the retailers' joy. The blue-chip index traded sideways for most of the day before being hit by the chill wind coming from Wall Street. Profit-taking in the US spurred a late sell-off which left Footsie 100.3 worse off at 5743.9.

The smaller indices were more cushioned against the international

bearishness. The Mid Cap finished 24.3 lower at 4901.7, while the Small Cap fell 5.9 to 2065.0. The new All-Share index, which brings together the Small Cap and the Fledgling indices, ended its first day down 0.3 at 1172.67.

BT was hit by a rogue trade. The telecom group was down 47.5p to 8309.5p - Footsie's worst performer - after a few shares changed hands at 830.5p one minute before the close. Until then the shares had been coasting along at around 837p.

Royal Bank of Scotland, down 5 pence to 913p, was BT's rival for the wooden spoon, as the market fretted over the size of the bad debts to be unveiled with Thursday's results.

United News and Media shed 26.5p to 585.5p after losing another senior executive. Roger Loughton, the head of its broadcasting unit is to retire at Easter next year.

Different picture at Carlton. The ITV company, results today, tumbled in a 4.5 pence rise to 487p amid talk that it is to buy PolyGram's film library and an ABN Amro buyout.

Did talk of the business for FKI too. The engineer was hoisted over

8 pence to 146.5p on whispers that a US predator has eyed its software business. Broker Panmure also gave the stock a friendly push.

AEA Technology, up 22.5p to 800p was not far off. The business

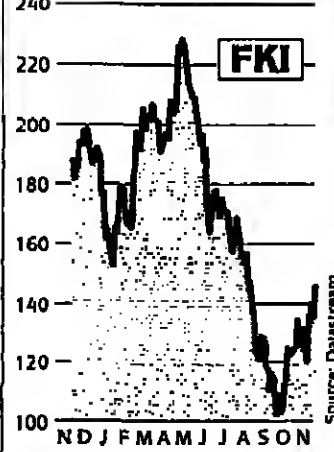
CONNAUGHT, a West-Country-based facilities management group, began its stock market adventure with a 15.5p gain to 140.5p. The company, traded on AIM, specialises in the maintenance of council houses and schools. Yesterday it raised over 23m through a placing of 2.5 million shares. The money will be used to fund bolt-on acquisitions in the fast-growing cleaning and maintenance sector and to expand across the country.

services group was helped by better-than-expected results and good prospects for its nuclear clean-up operations.

Emerson, the US giant stalking the electronic minnow Astec with a £265m bid, took a giant step towards

SHARE SPOTLIGHT

share price, pence



victory. The Americans bought 27 per cent of Astec in the market at the 85p bid price. They now own over 78 per cent of their prey. A batch of shareholders including Royal & Sun Alliance and Capital, were said to be among the sellers. Astec finished up 0.5p at 84.5p on massive volume of 85.2 million shares.

Creos International, a small producer of generators for medical

imaging companies, plunged 44 per cent to 4.75p - the worst fall in the whole market - after announcing the disposal of its US operations to avoid running out of cash.

These days profit warnings come

RUMOURS of bid activity at United Carriers, up 2p to 16p. The parcels group is said to have received an approach of £5m-£10m from GE Capital, the financial services arm of General Electric of the US. However, United's board is thought to be hostile to the bid. The company was at the centre of takeover speculation in February when it announced merger talks with a mystery partner. The negotiations were called off in April.

in family packs. Yesterday it was "buy one, get five free" day. Elements, the former Harrison & Crofield, was the more eye-catching. The chemicals group shed 22 per cent to close at a five-year low of 75p after warning of a slump in

sales in its core businesses. Elements' poor chemistry dragged down fellow chemical groups. Albright & Wilson, down 4.2 pence to 80p, Yule Catto, 13p lower at 284.5p, and Croda International, down 9.5p to 245.5p, were all tarred with the same brush.

Rugby was also in a scrum. The building materials group cautioned about its joinery business and fell over 7 pence to 81.5p. The other profit warnings came from the minnows.

Critchley Group, an electro-components maker, shed 115p to 455p after blaming market conditions for an interim plunge. Recycling Services, a waste business, threw away 19 pence to 20.5p after a profit slide. UNO, the furniture maker, was sitting uncomfortably after a bearish trading update sent the shares down 15 pence to 46p.

Nord Anglia, a provider of educational services, made it six with a warning that its language division has been hit by sterling's strength. It lost 29.5p to 164.5p.

SEAQ VOLUME: 936.7 million
SEAQ TRADING: 68,398
GILT INDEX: n/a

Investment: Chemicals specialist runs into trouble after selling off other businesses

Elementis plunges on profit warning

ELEMENTIS, the company formerly known as Harrison & Crossfield, yesterday shocked the stock market with a profit warning just as it completed its transformation into a pure specialty chemical group.

Shares in Elementis, which changed its name earlier this year after selling off its timber and pet-foods business, lost 27 per cent of their value as the company warned that demand for its chemical products had suffered a slowdown as a result of the Asian crisis and de-stocking in the aerospace industry.

The warning came as Elementis sold BOCM Pauls, its pig production and animal feed division, to a management buyout team backed by Electra Fleming, the venture capital group, for £60m. The sale, which triggers an £11m exceptional loss, completes Elementis's year-long conversion from a sprawling conglomerate into a company concentrating on specialty chemicals.

The strategy has largely won the support of the City. In retrospect, however, Elementis could hardly have chosen a worse time to make

BY PETER THAL LARSEN

the switch. As yesterday's warning made clear, demand for both its main product lines has taken a hit in the second half of the year.

Sales of chromic oxide, which is used in the production of super-alloys for the aerospace industry, have been hit by de-stocking. Meanwhile slower demand for paints in the US has hit the group's pigments division. The shares dropped 21p to 75p.

Lyndon Cole, the new Elementis chief executive who was brought in from General Electric of the US earlier this year, said the poor performance had nothing to do with the company's restructuring. "It's purely down to economic factors feeding through," he said, adding that he expected some improvement in trading in the first quarter of 1999.

But analysts were dismayed. "This profit warning has come as a bolt from the blue," said Jeremy Chantry, chemicals analyst at Credit Lyonnais Laing. He now forecasts pre-tax profits of £50m for the year

to December, with a small rise to £55m next year.

Michael Eastwood, analyst at Dresner Kleinwort Benson, said: "Everything is going wrong. The environment is appalling."

Despite the disappointment, few observers felt the need to question Elementis's strategy of concentrating on chemicals. "Anything is better than pigs and animal feeds," said Williams de Broe analyst Peter Cartwright. "At least they've got one foot out of the mire."

The share price drop might even make Elementis a bid target. Britain's specialty chemicals sector has been seen as ripe for consolidation for some time, as large chemical companies seek to add new products to their portfolio by snapping up smaller niche players. In the past year a number of smaller companies such as Allied Colloids, Courtauld and Inspec have been taken over. "Elementis is now quite a tasty morsel," one observer said.

However, analysts played down the likelihood of a bid, pointing out that Elementis's chrome and pig-

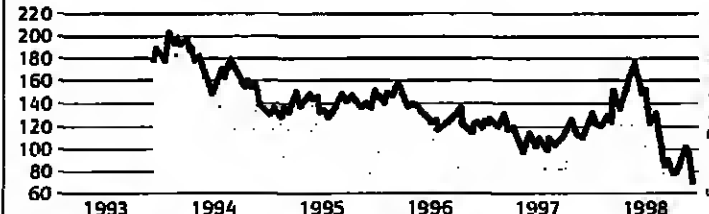
ELEMENTIS: AT A GLANCE

Market value: £325m, share price 75p (-21p)

Five-year record	1994	1996	1997	1997	1998*
Turnover (£bn)	2.11	2.05	2.05	1.92	2.05
Pre-tax profits (£m)	237.00	120.00	121.00	-113.00	50.00
Earnings per share (p)			11.20	-16.40	8.50
Dividends per share (p)			9.00	3.60	4.00

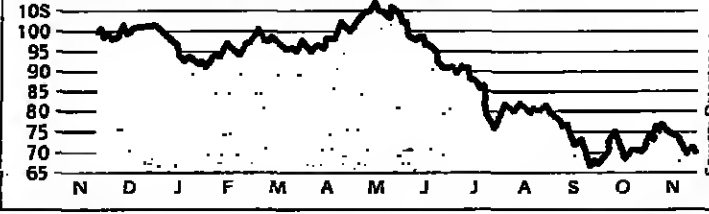
* Credit Lyonnais Laing forecasts before exceptional items and goodwill

Share price



How chemical stocks have underperformed

FTSE Chemicals index vs FTSE All Share, 50 Nov 1997=100



ments divisions would each appeal to very different buyers. "Even at the reduced share price one expects dullness for some time," Mr Chantry said.

Mr Cole said the temporary shortfall would not deter Elementis

Deutsche shows who'll be the boss

THE JOINT press conference given by Rolf Breuer, Deutsche Bank's chairman, and his counterpart Frank Newman of Bankers Trust to outline their \$9bn link-up yesterday illustrated perfectly their relationship. Mr Breuer begged the podium for a good 25 minutes, leaving Mr Newman just five minutes at the end.

Fair enough. As Mr Breuer pointed out: "This is an acquisition." Its good to see that the integration of the German and American banks is going to be pushed ahead with typical Teutonic efficiency. As Deutsche's press release put it, they are "planning to complete the deal by May 1999" - some nine months before it was signed.

JANET SIDAWAY has thoroughly enjoyed being one of the City's top-rated engineering analysts for the last 15 years, but now she is quitting her current employers, Dresner Kleinwort Benson, in favour of King's College, London, to do a two-year postgraduate diploma in theology and religious studies.

"I don't really like publicity," Ms Sidaway, says, adding that her colleagues' response to her new-found career has involved "a lot of teasing".

So why the switch? "It's something I've always wanted to do, and now seemed the right time," she says. She is already used to big changes, having followed a first class degree in English from York University with seven years as an engineer with TI Group, back in the 1970s.

In a *Who's Who of Analysts* dated 1992 she listed her interests as "Wagner, Romanticism art, gardening." Clearly the engineering sector will be a duller place without her.

SMALL BUSINESSES running into financial difficulties can now ring a state-of-the-art helpline from Pannell Kerr Forster, the accountants, called "A Friend in Need".

Hang on a minute. The "Friend" line is being run by PKF's insolvency practitioners. Who wants to ring up an undertaker if you're in trouble?

John Alexander, senior insolvency partner at PKF, and currently receiver of the Fashion Cafe in Lon-

PEOPLE AND BUSINESS

BY JOHN WILLCOCK

DAVID POTTER, chief executive of Guinness Mahon, is looking forward to Saturday. His colleagues from Investec, the South African financial services group which bought Guinness Mahon earlier this year, are flying in en masse to watch the rugby Test match at Twickenham between England and South Africa. The bank has even re-branded the match as the "Investec International".

Mr Potter is betting on 23-17 to England, although he admits that his visitors led by Bernard Kanor, Investec Group's managing director, "will no doubt give you a different score."

It will be an historic occasion whatever happens, since the world champion Springboks are seeking to break the All Blacks' world record of 17 consecutive Test victories.

The lucky chap who wins the Man of the Match award will receive a Krugerrand supplied by Investec - a gold coin first minted in South Africa on 3 July 1967 which has since become a standard for gold, and is currently worth around £179.

don, says there shouldn't be a "perception problem" with the line. "People know we're not the ogres we're portrayed as - we're not ghouls out to get what we can."

In fact the helpline is mostly rung by businesses which are having trouble collecting debts from other firms - and want to know the best way to get their money back. Something Mr Alexander and his chaps are experts at.

"Insolvency is a nasty word perhaps, but people want to know what the procedures are," he concludes.

Imperial confident on smokers' litigation



Tobacco companies are expected to be only marginally affected in the event of a recession

GARETH DAVIES, chief executive of Imperial Tobacco, remains confident about the outcome of the latest bout of litigation against the company, but admits that continuing speculation over such cases makes life uncomfortable for investors.

Imperial, which owns John Player, Embassy and market-leading Lambert and Butler brands, is involved in 16 product liability lawsuits in the UK, with one case brought by 49 smokers due to be heard in the Appeal Court next week.

On the subject of the forthcoming lawsuit, Mr Davies said he was very confident of Imperial's position. "We have made no provision for possible damage payments."

Imperial has no exposure to the US market, and was not involved in the recent \$206bn settlement between cigarette companies and US health authorities.

Announcing a 6 per cent rise in full year pre-tax profits to £225m, Mr

BY SIMON DUKE

Davies was extremely pleased at the results and the "successful integration of the Rizla business into the group."

He expects UK cigarette sales to continue to fall by up to 7 per cent annually, due to declining cigarette consumption, bootleg sales and the Government's "penal taxation policy."

Mr Davies wants to continue the expansion into the more stable European market, which has seen Imperial acquire Rizla and the Dutch Douwe Egbert tobacco business this year, but he refused to be drawn on possible takeover targets.

The results were broadly in line with City forecasts, with the share price rising by 1 pence to 634p. The City regards tobacco companies as defensive stocks, meaning that, in the event of a recession, their earn-

ings are only marginally affected. In an economic downturn smokers are more likely to change their brand than give up altogether.

For this reason, both Imperial and the rival cigarette producer Gallaher have enjoyed considerable share price rises in recent months, with Imperial surging 52 per cent since the end of June.

One City pundit said Imperial's figures looked good. "At current levels their price/earnings ratio is 25 per cent below the market as a whole."

The litigation threat is seen as minimal, and analysts would be surprised if there were any damage to the company as a result of the lawsuits.

One commentator said "both Imperial and Gallaher have had great runs since July. Although the company is in good shape, it is unlikely that the share price has much further to go."

FOREIGN EXCHANGE RATES

Country	Sterling Spot	1 month	3 month	Dollar Spot	1 month	3 month	D-Mark Spot
UK	1.0000	2.4252	2.6194	0.6064	0.6071	0.6086	0.3577
Australia	2.6278	19.647	19.939	1.5935	1.5939	1.5942	0.3400
Belgium	57.709	57.541	57.252	34.995	34.995	34.995	0.9035
Canada	2.5255	2.521	2.5149	1.5315	1.5307	1.5306	0.9035
Denmark	10.664	10.612	10.575	6.4485	6.4450	6.4360	8.8041
ECU	1.4243	1.4206	1.4138	1.1578	1.1595	1.1622	0.8235
Finland	8.5070	8.4821	8.4468	5.1580	5.1687	5.1774	5.0435
France	2.9380	2.9352	2.9305	5.6880	5.6778	5.6634	3.3555
Germany	2.9380	2.9352	2.9305	5.6880	5.6778	5.6634	3.3555
Greece	469.43	471.41	474.38	204.67	206.20	208.72	1.6733
Hong Kong	12.758	12.751	12.748	7.7428	7.7452	7.7585	4.5676
Ireland	1.1252	1.1222	1.1170	1.4655	1.4678	1.4710	0.8645
Italy	2.7658	2.7610	2.7475	167.50	167.62	167.72	990.47
Japan	203.08	201.80	199.71	123.15	123.25	123.35	2.2420
Malaysia	6.2672	6.3224	6.4688	9.9950	10.077	10.301	5.8952
Netherlands	16.482	16.482	16.482	1.9118	1.9118	1.9118	1.1718
New Zealand	3.1527	3.1527	3.1527	1.5051	1.5051	1.5051	0.3097
Norway	13.407	13.407	13.407	7.5203	7.5203	7.5203	4.4254
Portugal	206.55	206.55	206.55	173.04	173.04	173.04	3.4815
Saudi Arabia	6.1848	6.1848	6.1848	3.7505	3.7505	3.7505	5.6598
Singapore	2.7193	2.7193	2.7193	5.6925	5.6925	5.6925	1.6373
South Africa	9.3872	9.3872	9.3872	144.25	144.25	144.25	3.3581
Spain	27.088	27.088	27.088	8.1360	8.1360	8.1360	85.096
Sweden	13.417	13.417	13.417	1.3960	1.3960	1.3960	0.8235
Switzerland	2.5021	2.5021	2.5021	1.3960	1.3960	1.3960	0.8235
US	1.9491	1.9491	1.9491	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	0.5899

OTHER SPOT RATES

Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	1.6491	1.0000	Oman	0.6348	0.3850
Brazil	1.9796	1.2005	Pakistan	82.205	49.850
China	12.651	8.2779	Philippines	34.975	39.400
Czech Rep	50.205	30.445	Poland	5.7412	3.4815
Egypt	5.150	3.4050	Qatar	6.0021	5.6598
France	32.55	234.00	Russia	3200.5	1822.0
Germany	36.44	221.00	South Korea	35.477	124.00
Greece	70.208	42.575	Taiwan	56.078	32.425
Hong Kong	12.758	76.000	Thailand	59.481	30.780
India	12.532	0.3036	Turkey	50.098	30.780
Indonesia	8.5006	85.000	UAE	6.0570	3.3730
Israel	140.17				

INTEREST RATES

UK	Base	6.75%	Germany	Discount	2.50%	US	Prime	7.75%	Japan	Discount	0.50%
France	Intervention	3.30%	Canada	Prime	4.50%	Belgium	Discount	4.50%	Belgium	Discount	2.75%
Italy	Discount	4.00%	Denmark	Repo/Aus	3.50%	Switzerland	Discount	1.00%	Switzerland	Discount	1.00%
Netherlands	Discount	4.00%	Sweden	Repo/Aus	3.60%	Lombard	Discount	5.83%	Lombard	Discount	5.83%
Spain	Discount	4.00%	Repo/Aus	3.60%	Lombard	Discount	5.83%	Lombard	Discount	5.83%	

BOND YIELDS											
Country	3 mth	chg	1 yr	chg	2 yr	chg	5 yr	chg	10 yr	chg	
Australia	4.62	-0.02	4.54	0.05	4.35	-0.03	4.75	-0.04	5.09	-0.03	
Belgium	5.86	0.02	5.40	0.00	5.34	0.02	5.60	-0.02	4.19	-0.03	
Canada	4.75	0.00	4.90	-0.06	4.82	-0.03	4.86	-0.08	5.03	-0.08	
ECU	5.79	-0.01	5.50	-0.02	5.40	-0.02	5.70	-0.02	4.11	-0.01	
France	6.00	0.00	3.24	0.00	3.34	0.01	3.58	-0.02	4.11	-0.02	
Germany	3.65	-0.01	3.47	-0.01	3.26	0.02	3.51	-0.03	4.00	-0.04	
Italy	3.55	0.02	3.46	0.03	5.48	0.00	5.81	-0.03	4.12	-0.02	
Japan	0.15	-0.01	1.50	-0.02	1.41	-0.01	0.68	-0.01	1.09	-0.02	
N.Lands	5.47	0.00	5.48	-0.01	3.35	0.01	3.51	-0.02	4.07	-0.01	
Spain	3.25	0.00	3.27	0.02	3.35	0.00	3.61	-0.01	4.35	0.09	
Sweden	3.64	0.00	3.65	-0.01	3.69	-0.03	3.89	-0.04	4.35	-0.01	
UK	1.75	0.01	1.68	-0.01	1.41	-0.01	1.81	-0.01	4.40	-0.01	
US	6.65	0.52	6.38	-0.02	5.23	-0.03	4.84	-0.04	4.65	-0.07	
US	4.38	...	4.31	...	4.55	...	4.51	...	4.74	...	

MONY MARKET RATES											
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MONEY MARKET RATES

Overnight	1 week	1 month	3 months	6 months	1 year
Bid Offer	Bid Offer	Bid Offer	Bid Offer	Bid Offer	Bid Offer
LIBOR	7.05	6.95	6.75	6.65	
Treasury Bills					
Domestic Depos	5.00	7.00	6.81	6.54	6.78
Overseas Depos	5.34	7.08	6.88	6.64	6.75
Single Bank Bills					
Sterling CDs					
Eurodollar CDs					
ECU Deposits					

LIFFE FINANCIAL FUTURES

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est. floor volume	Open Interest
Long Gilt	Dec-98	117.09	117.15	116.50	12895.00
5 Yr Gilt	Mar-99	108.75	114.20	114.25	175.00
German Bund	Dec-98	114.72	112.95	112.19	21672.00
Italian Bond	Dec-98	135.70	136.98	136.46	3588.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	Dec-98	93.29	93.29	93.26	189471.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	Jan-99	94.25	94.25	94.20	8007.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	Feb-99	96.42	96.45	96.40	31720.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	Mar-99	96.63	96.63	96.62	800.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	Apr-99	96.73	96.74	96.71	161275.00

Where football is a fight for survival

FIRST DIVISION			SECOND DIVISION			THIRD DIVISION					
Turnover	Wages	Profit/ (loss)	Turnover	Wages	Profit/ (loss)	Turnover	Wages	Profit/ (loss)			
(96-97) (96-97)	(96-97) (96-97)	(96-97) (96-97)	(96-97) (96-97)	(96-97) (96-97)	(96-97) (96-97)	(96-97) (96-97)	(96-97) (96-97)	(96-97) (96-97)			
Barnsley	3.7m	2.6m	0.3m	Blackpool	2.4m	2.0m	(0.8m)	Barnet	n/d	n/d	0.4m
Thirty years in Premiership, budgeted for relegation. Relatively stable.			Losing £500,000+ per season. Want new stadium (doubtful). May sell otherwise.			Northampton	1.6m	n/d	(98.00m)		
Birmingham	7.6m	4.9m	1.1m	Bournemouth	1.1m	1.0m	(0.5m)	"Who would want to buy this club?" said spokesman. Surviving in post-administration era.			
Bankrolled by David Sullivan. Managed well financially by Karen Brady.			Tight ship run by fans: co-operative. Bankers insist club runs in the black.			Notts County	1.4m	1.5m	(0.6m)		
Bolton	7.7m	6.2m	(3.3m)	Bristol Rovers	1.4m	1.5m	3,000	£2.5m loss, despite commercial income. Differed for sale earlier this year.			
£17m in the red but have assets, including old ground Burnden Park.			Want new stadium to secure future.			Oldham	3.1m	2.8m	0.4m		
Bury	1.9m	1.3m	(0.9m)	Burnley	3.7m	1.7m	(0.8m)	£1.2m loss to May. Considering investment offer from local brewery.			
No comment from the club. Are finding First Division more expensive than Second.			No comment from club			Preston	3.8m	2.1m	0.1m		
Bradford	7.6m	n/a	1.7m	Chesterfield	3.2m	1.0m	1.2m	Relying on new 30,000-seat stadium being developed for growth.			
Well run, capable of profits. Would like to share facilities with rugby league club to increase profitability.			Profits in 1996-97 due to sale of Kevin Davies to Southampton and FA Cup run			Reading	3.3m	3.0m	(0.5m)		
Bristol City	2.3m	2.0m	(0.4m)	Colchester	0.9m	0.8m	18,000	New stadium will help ease financial worries - if it can be filled.			
Lost £300,000 to May. Surviving by benefactor chairman. Want new stadium.			£250,000 loss projected this year. Low wages already. Relying on new stadium.			Stoke	5.0m	2.9m	(0.3m)		
Crewe	1.4m	1.1m	0.3m	Fulham	2.1m	1.5m	(0.8m)	"We're in our worst case scenario," said spokesman on being relegated. Need immediate promotion to prosper.			
Wage spiral having a big effect. Relegation would exacerbate problems.			Losing millions, but Al Fayed has deep pockets. Self funding in five years is the optimistic plan.			Walsall	2.4m	1.7m	22,000		
Crystal Palace	7.9m	5m	(0.5m)	Gillingham	1.9m	1.0m	28,000	Well run club, many extra-football activities (including boxing) help small profits			
No comment from club. Chairman Mark Goldberg overseeing reeve of club's finances. Triamp Group Limited, an oil company, announced "substantial sums" available for the club on Sunday.			Keep wages low to manage costs. Looking at alternative income sources			Wigan	0.9m	1.7m	(1.8m)		
Derby	2.2m	2.0m	0.5m	Lincoln City	1.0m	1.1m	(0.3m)	Losing £1m+ per year. Low attendances. Surviving by benefactor chairman			
Making small profits but looking to relocate to achieve growth.			"Our only ambition is to remain solvent." Losses of £2m per year. For sale			Wrexham	1.7m	1.4m	0.5m		
Huddersfield	3.7m	2.3m	(0.2m)	Luton	3.0m	2.8m	(0.1m)	Making small profits through tight budgets, investing in a new stand to attract higher crowds			
Lost £300,000 to May. Will lose same again this year. Currently negotiating a sell-out to millionaire local businessman.			Budgeted loss £1.6m. Chairman wants new stadium. Will sell otherwise.			Wycombe	3.2m	1.8m	(0.4m)		
Ipswich	6.2m	4.3m	1.1m	Macclesfield	Figures not disclosed	Would consider selling, despite saying "our heads are above water."		"Existing from season to season," said a spokesman. Losing £1.5m per year. Sell if good offer			
Loss of £1.4m to May this year, but generally stable.			Man City	12.7m	7.2m	(3.9m)		York	1.1m	1.0m	(0.1m)
Norwich	6.3m	3.8m	(1.2m)					Benefactor chairman happy to meet yearly losses. "I'm still a nutcase"			
Made £1.2m operating profit to May 1996 due to transfers. Stable.			No comment from club. For sale to the right buyer. Losing money.								
Oxford Utd	2.2m	2.3m	(1.9m)								
£13m in debt and most in danger in First Division of going under											
Portsmouth	4.4m	3.3m	(2.1m)								
Losing a lot of money. Chairman might sell. "Everything has a price," said spokesman.											
Port Vale	2.7m	1.9m	0.9m								
Construction of £4m stand underway as a means to increase income.											
QPR	7.5m	6.7m	(7.1m)								
No comment from club. Ground sharing (Wasps rugby) one measure for cost cuts											
Sheff Utd	5.1m	3.6m	(3.1m)								
Lost £6m to May. New plc chairman, Carlo Colombotto, took over last week.											
Stockport	2.9m	1.8m	0.3m								
Commercial activity and community ventures have led to small profits											

Marino passes magical 400 total

THE MIAMI quarterback, Dan Marino, has been overshadowed by the other passing legend, Denver's John Elway, for much of the season, but on Sunday the veteran Dolphin reclaimed centre stage when he threw the 400th touchdown pass of his 16-year career.

The pass, one of three scoring plays to the receiver O J McDuffie in the 30-10 win over the New Orleans Saints, means that Marino is the only player ever to throw 400 touchdowns. The achievement is all the more remarkable when you consider that Elway, the third most prolific touchdown passer ever, has yet to throw 300.

Marino has been around long enough to realise that owning virtually every record counts for little, and he would probably happily give them all up for the one thing he craves most, a Super Bowl ring. "It's a lot of touchdown passes," he said afterwards, "but winning is the most important thing".

That has always been the tenet of the irascible Saints coach, Mike Ditka, who guided the Chicago Bears to the championship in 1986. Success has proved harder to come by in New Orleans, and while Ditka has worked hard to control his infamous temper, the loss in Miami prompted another spectacular tirade.

"That is the most pathetic exhibition of football I have ever seen," he fumed. "Defense was horrible, offense was horrible, and special teams weren't any better. We were out-coached and outplayed."

High drama in New England, where the Patriots kept their season alive with a dramatic 25-21 victory over the Buffalo Bills. Their quarterback, Drew Bledsoe, played the game despite a double fracture of the index finger in his throwing hand, and his leadership proved the difference in a hard-fought affair.

The game's final moments proved highly controversial.

AMERICAN FOOTBALL

BY NICK HALLING

Trailing by four points, Bledsoe led his team on one last drive. With less than 10 seconds left, he completed a pass to Shawn Jefferson. The officials ruled it a good catch, although replays showed that Jefferson was out of bounds.

Then, as time expired, he threw a pass into the end zone which fell incomplete. The referee called a penalty against Buffalo, giving the Patriots one more play with no time left. Bledsoe duly completed the

fourth quarter which sealed the win.

There were no problems for two other post-season aspirants, the New York Jets and the Jacksonville Jaguars. The Jets disposed of the Carolina Panthers 48-21, the running back Curtis Martin scoring twice and gaining 110 yards in total. The quarterback Vinny Testaverde continued to prosper, throwing a pair of touchdowns to the receiver Wayne Chrebet.

Jacksonville negotiated a potentially awkward trip to Cincinnati thanks to their quarterback, Mark Brunell, who threw four scoring passes in the 34-17 triumph.

Elsewhere, the Green Bay Packers saw the return of the running back Dorsey Levens, who missed the last nine games through injury. The Packers duly disposed of the Philadelphia Eagles, 24-16. The Seattle Seahawks kept their flickering hopes alive when the kicker

Todd Peterson converted a 48-yard field goal to give the Seahawks a 20-18 verdict over the Tennessee Oilers.

The pre-season Super Bowl favourites Kansas City ended their wretched six-game losing streak by defeating the Arizona Cardinals. The quarterback Rich Gannon threw three touchdowns, but despite the 34-24 result, the Chiefs' season has effectively come to its end.

Results and tables, Digest, page 27



Steve DeBerg, the Atlanta Falcons quarterback, prepares to pass as team-mate Bob Whitfield blocks Mike Jones of the St Louis Rams AP

Fareham fall foul of Dodds and Co

HOCKEY

BY BILL COLWILL

FAREHAM, THE South Premier leaders, had their colours lowered for the first time this season when they lost their maximum points record at Beckenham in a thrilling game.

In a devastating opening spell, Beckenham went three goals up. A sensational fourth-minute goal from Simon Hughes paved the way, collecting the ball outside the 25-yard area, he drove powerfully into the Fareham circle and let fly a screamer into the roof of the net.

Michael Dodds cashed in with a couple of goals and shell-shocked Fareham were struggling. Picking themselves up, they took the game to Beckenham but were let down by a woeful penalty-corner drill. It was not until their 15th penalty corner that Jim Moseley scored a consolation.

Despite not winning a single corner, Beckenham are now in second place having closed the gap to Fareham to three points with a game in hand. Winchester moved into third with a 2-0 win against Herne Bay, James Wakely scoring twice.

Cambridge University held to a 3-3 draw by Croxteth, also lost their 100 per cent record, in the Premier Holidays East Premier. In the North, Sheffield Bankers took over the leadership on goal difference from Formby, Edgbaston, in spite of only drawing with Coventry & North Warwick, held their place at the top in the DTZ Midlands Premier.

TODAY'S NUMBER

53m

The amount in dollars (£33.1m) which baseball pitcher Randy Johnson will earn over the next four years after signing a deal with Arizona Diamondbacks.

Ayr have European destiny in their hands

AYR SCOTTISH EAGLES are hoping to avoid another bitter European experience as they take aim at history for a second time.

The fate of Jim Lynch's side is still in their own hands as they only need a point from tonight's final divisional game in Mannheim to be assured of a place in the second round.

Defeat in regulation time for Eagles would leave them pinning their dreams on the

ICE HOCKEY

BY IAN PARKES

Czech side, Litvinov, beating the Russian champions Kazan on the road - an unlikely scenario. Ayr faced a similar situation two weeks ago when they needed a win in Litvinov to become the first British team to progress to the next phase of such a major European competition.

But after holding a two-goal cushion early in the third period, they eventually lost on penalties to send the four-team group down to the wire.

Despite Ayr's indifferent form in the Sekonda Superleague, Lynch believes his side can take advantage of Mannheim's veteran defence and avenge their 6-3 defeat against the Germans earlier this year. "We blew it against the Czechs. But we are capable of

winning in Germany because although Mannheim are experienced, their defence is old and slow," he said. "Whatever happens we have had a very positive European debut."

The defenceman Jeff Hoad, meanwhile, knows Eagles cannot afford the mental slip-ups they showed against Litvinov.

"All we needed last time out was a win, but we shot ourselves in the foot. We now just need to stay focused," he said.

Exhausted O'Sullivan eyes Dublin

RONNIE O'SULLIVAN, who failed to defend his UK Championship title in Bournemouth because of physical and mental exhaustion, has withdrawn from next month's German Masters.

The Essex player, 23 next Saturday, hopes to make a comeback in the Irish Open starting on 15 December. O'Sullivan was due to play Steve Davis or Alan McManis in his first match of the invitation tournament in Bingen.

SNOOKER

On rankings the replacement spot should go to world No 11, Anthony Hamilton, but Matthew Stevens might be in line after his fine performance in the UK Championship, when he finished runner-up to John Higgins.

Higgins starts as the favourite for the Malta Grand Prix, an eight-man invitation event featuring Stephen Hendry, the 1997 world champion Ken Doherty,

Jimmy White, the Masters champion Mark Williams plus three local players including Tony Drago, later this week.

In becoming the UK champion for the first time on Sunday, when he claimed the £75,000 first prize to take his earnings past the £1.5m mark with a 10-6 victory over Stevens, Higgins is only the third player after Steve Davis and Hendry to hold World and UK titles plus the world No 1 spot in the same year.

WIN AN EVENING WITH SOME OF YOUR SPORTING HEROES AND A TRIP TO THE SYDNEY 2000 OLYMPIC GAMES.



The Independent and the Australian Tourist Commission have teamed up to offer one lucky reader and a friend or partner the chance not only to dine with some of Britain's most famous sporting heroes at the Sports Writers Association Annual Dinner at the London Hilton on Monday 4th December, but also the opportunity to fly to Sydney and visit the 2000 Olympic Games.

The 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney are set to generate unprecedented levels of interest. More than anything, Australians are famous for their obsession with sports. The continent has established its reputation as a leading sporting nation and is host to some of the world's most prestigious sporting events. So there's never been a better time to head Down Under and discover what Australia has to offer. Sportsworld, the British Olympic Association's appointed tour operator, has provided the winner with six nights' accommodation in a twin room and two event tickets. Sportsworld has a comprehensive range of programmes from fully inclusive packages to flight and ticket options. Call Sportsworld for full package details.

Qantas Airways is providing two return tickets to Sydney. Qantas is Australia's international airline and has, for nearly 80 years, been at the forefront of providing new and better ways to take you safely and comfortably to your destination. Qantas flies twice daily to Australia and serves all seven international gateways.

The Independent have selected 6 sporting personalities from those previously honoured over the past 50 years - all you have to do is to vote for one of the athletes who in your opinion has contributed the most to their sport. Phone the number opposite the name listed below and tell us on the line the reason for your selection and leave your name, full address and a daytime telephone number. You could be the lucky winner who receives a pair of tickets to the Sports Writers Association Dinner and your trip to the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games.

The Independent selections are as follows:

- SIR BOBBY CHARLTON:** Key member of England's 1966 World Cup-winning team who has become a great sports ambassador. 0901 477 7331
- BRITAIN'S GREATEST EVER SPRINTER:** He won world, European and Olympic titles. 0901 477 7332
- SEBASTIAN COE:** Record-breaking middle-distance runner who won gold at 1980 and 1984 Olympics. 0901 477 7333
- MARY RAND:** Won gold in the long jump, silver in the pentathlon and bronze in the relay in the Tokyo Olympics of 1964. 0901 477 7334
- STEVE REDGRAVE:** Has won 4 Olympic rowing gold medals. Who would bet against number five in Sydney. 0901 477 7335
- VIRGINIA WADE:** Won Wimbledon in the Queen's Silver Jubilee year 1977 to take a place in tennis folklore. 0901 477 7336

Terms and Conditions. 1) Calls cost 60p per minute and should last no longer than two minutes. 2) Winners will be picked at random after the lines close at midnight on Sunday 6 December 1998. 3) Tickets are not transferable there are no substitute prizes or cash alternatives. 4) Normal independent rules apply. 5) The Editor's decision is final. 6) All entrants must be aged 18 or over and have a valid passport and visa to travel. 7) Open to residents of the UK, Republic of Ireland and the Channel Islands, excluding employees of Independent Newspapers, Qantas Airways or Sportsworld Group PLC, their families, their agencies or any other company directly connected with the administration of this competition. 8) On entering this competition contestants are deemed to have accepted and agreed to be bound by the competition rules. Entry instructions form part of the rules. 9) The prize consists of 2 economy class tickets London - Sydney - London. The prize winner and their partner must travel together for the whole journey, insurance is not included but must be provided. 10) All bookings subject to availability. Once booked no changes to be made without the consent of Qantas and without payment of the relevant charge. 11) Outbound flights must be taken during September 2000 inclusive. 12) Flights are subject to Qantas's Terms and Conditions of carriage and availability. 13) Exact travel dates, accommodation and event tickets to be subject to final agreement between Sportsworld and prize winners.

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TUESDAY REVIEW

COMMENT • FEATURES • ARTS • LISTINGS • TELEVISION

It's got to go

Oscar Wilde deserved a monument fit for a hero of art, love and politics.

Instead Maggi Hambling has sculpted a wilfully tacky, silly, Tussaudian tragedy

BY TOM LUBBOCK

The cause itself was right and good and overdue. There should certainly be a monument to Oscar Wilde in London, the scene of his triumphs and trials and fall. It should be a major monument. We're not talking about some half-cocked tourist-trapping nonsense, like the statue of Charlie Chaplin in Leicester Square. This would be a monument with serious business to do – for us, for London.

It's a kind of test case. Many people doubt whether public sculpture is nowadays capable of doing serious business at all. It's quite hard to imagine what that would even feel like. But consider Wilde's story: it's a big one with big themes. Don't just think of the irresistible personality or the slave of beauty or the glittering dramatist or the sexual dissident and martyr. Think of the destructive *amour fou*, the reckless double life, the noble but evasive court defence, the determination to face disgrace, the broken prisoner.

It's not just a life that's involved. Wilde's story is iconic: he's a hero of art, love, politics, comedy, individualism, conscience. It's on our conscience too. It's a piece of grand, emblematic, messy, unfinished history – heroic, tragic, pathetic, shameful – that needs public remembering and honour and reparation. That's a job a public sculpture, just imaginably, might do, and not for Wilde's sake only, but for ours.

Public sculpture, ideally, doesn't merely stand there as outdoor decor or eye-catching curio. It stands for us. It's a form of collective speech and collective action. True, Wilde has his tomb in Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris, one of Epstein's finest, and he now has a memorial in Poets' Corner. But a Wilde monument, permanently visible on London's streets, might have been and done something great. Perhaps something like that was what was originally envisaged. The idea was the late Derek Jarman's. The campaign was taken up by various prominent cultural figures, including Sir Jeremy Isaacs, Dame Judi Dench, Sir Ian McKellen and Nobel Laureate Seamus Heaney. Design-proposals were invited from artists. Funds were raised by public subscription, and from various charitable bodies. The project showed a real and proper Victorian public spirit. And if the emi-

nent persons behind it had any sense of the serious work their monument might do... Well, how could they conceivably have entrusted the job to Maggi Hambling?

But that's what they did. And *A Conversation with Oscar Wilde* was unveiled yesterday in Adelaide Street, the pedestrianised area behind St-Martin-in-the-Fields, with the state's blessing too. The Culture Secretary was among the notables in attendance. It is a figurative work. It is a plain disaster. As a piece of any-old-street-sculpture, dead silly. In view of the monument it might have been, a tragedy. There are many reasons: whimsy and triviality, to start with.

A polished stone sarcophagus is set on the pavement. Its top surface slopes up at one end, like a sun-lounger. To this slope, a bronze bust of Wilde, plus right hand, are attached – as if the figure was surfacing through the stone, as if Wilde were sitting up out of the tomb. Sitting up, and still talking away. Wilde is caught mid-mot, mouth gabbling, hand gesturing with cigarette. And he's talking to us – for the tomb works as a street bench too, where we can sit and enjoy *A Conversation*.

A "playful" piece then: already a very bad conception for a public work. And note that the Wilde memorialised here is only the irrepressible talker, the repartee-animal (plus a touch of the aesthete look – there's the carnation, patinated light green). We have nothing of the nerve, the folly, the ruin, the glory. We have nothing for history – only the whimsical notion of us chatting cheerfully with this anodyne figment.

It's a Tussauds Wilde. Or you might say, it preserves an image of Wilde just as a playboy of a hundred years ago might have liked it preserved. Fantastic wit and charm; magnificent character – terribly sad about, best not to think about the scandal, the trials, the goal. And don't tell me it shows Wilde "rising above" his misfor-

tures. Those misfortunes are the story.

As for that wit, the foot of the tomb is inscribed with a well-known line from *Lady Windermere's Fan*: "We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars." And I seem to remember someone brightly suggesting that the thought might particularly appeal to London's homeless, who are often found in this area.

It may well do. Anyone who's read the poetry pages of *The Big Issue* will know that homelessness is no cure for sentimentality. But it remains one of Wilde's stupider remarks. It's stupid because (a) some people really are in the gutter, but we aren't

all, and to pretend we are is sheer self-dramatisation, (b) if we were in the gutter, looking at the stars wouldn't much help – the metaphor is wilfully unimaginative about life in the gutter. What's more, its citation here, as emblematic or quintessential Wilde, is very untrue to Wilde's own experience. When he came to write *De Profundis* from prison he was fully alive to the falsity of this kind of air-headed high-mindedness.

All this is bad enough. But the decisive problem is not the message but the making of the piece. It's wilful tack. The bust and hand aren't solid metal. They materi-

alise from a sort of macaroni tangle of undulating tubey strands. It's a likeness – but why done like this? The head looks silly. The technique does too.

Hambling is mainly a painter, and I guess she may be going here for a sculptural version of one of her painting styles, where the figure is rendered in paint strands and loops, light on a dark ground. On canvas it can create a brisk, evanescent vivacity. But breezy brushstrokes can't be translated into three dimensions so literally. I mean, what does it look like? I'll tell you what.

In medieval tomb sculpture there's

something called a transi. You have a two-tier tomb, in which the deceased person is represented twice. On the top tier they lie, dressed, praying or whatever; more or less alive. Underneath they appear again – as a rotting cadaver, the flesh decomposing, riddled with worms. That's the transi. I think *A Conversation with Oscar Wilde* may be one too. Its construction looks distinctly verminiform.

But it can't be. We can't be meant to be chatting away with a wriggling corpse. It can't want to call Wilde worm-eaten. But in the circumstances, the association can't

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Which Europe?

Sir: The letter from the officers of the European Movement (30 November) on the vexed EMU question advances our knowledge or enlightenment not a jot. The same applies to letters from Eurosceptics – the same old arguments from the same sources who have been sounding off for years. Surely the position is this: The most stupid question one can ask today is: "Are you for or against Europe?" It is like asking: "Are you for or against the Atlantic?" There are just two queries that have to be addressed. The first is: "What kind of Europe?"

For years arguments have raged as to where exactly Europe, in the meaning of the EU, is really heading. Successive leaders have pleaded that we did not know enough and therefore could not decide. Following the multiple statements of last week this question has surely been answered clearly, decisively and finally, as fog disappearing before a stiff breeze. The EU is heading towards a single, highly centralised, fully integrated Federal Republic of Europe. No more talk of a "Europe of Nations" or De Gaulle's old *Union des Patries* please. We now know exactly what is in prospect and it is not going to change, whatever Britain's hopeful suasions.

The second question is therefore: "What in the view of a clear majority of the British people should be our relationship with that Europe over the decades to come?" And here the Rubicon is the abolition of the pound under EMU. Mr Major delayed for five years, Mr Blair wants another five and Mr Hague ten. The choice is clear, and there is no need for further delay. It is either full-fledged, no-holds-barred and enthusiastic absorption or a freshly negotiated sovereignty-based trading relationship.

It is not the decision that is causing ravages to our unity and national morale; it is the endless indecisiveness.
FREDERICK FORSYTH
Hertford

Sir: John Rentoul's article on EU tax harmonisation (28 November) was a useful antidote to some of last week's more extreme attempts to concoct a "hidden agenda" of EU tax rises. But it could usefully have added two points made clear by Commissioner Mario Monti, responsible for all proposals on EU tax matters.

First, far from being the standard-bearers of high tax, the Commission has consistently argued that EU governments should cut the proportion of GDP taken in tax. Fair tax competition benefits the European economy by making it more competitive. If goals can be met without taxes, so much the better. So the aim of reducing tax evasion on savings could be met either through a co-ordinated withholding tax, or by exchange of information. The current proposal leaves it to national governments to choose which option they prefer.

Second, the limits of the current debate should be clear. Any suggestion of a common EU income tax is ludicrous. Common action on VAT dates back to 1977, so another look at VAT within the Single Market makes sense, but there should always be some flexibility for EU governments to apply reduced rates to certain goods. Co-ordination to tackle tax evasion and tax breaks acting as hidden state aids means there would be even less reason to look at common rates of corporation tax.

It is quite natural for the 11 EU countries who will be using the euro in one month's time to be thinking hard about how to maximise the effectiveness of a newly strengthened Single Market. The UK government clearly understands this, as shown by Dawn Primarolo's active chairmanship of the current group on the code of conduct on unfair tax competition. This



Roaring Forties No 2: Crew members arriving for work on the new shift, in the latest of our series of photographs about life on Enterprise Oil's Neville Elder

understanding is not shared by much of the UK media, determined to see this through the prism of the domestic debate on whether or not to join the euro. But their attempts to score points by caricaturing the current debate are unlikely to register much interest in the countries concerned with the serious business of making the euro a success.
GEOFFREY MARTIN
Head of Representations in the United Kingdom
The European Commission
London SW1

Tyrant on trial

Sir: I have written to the Home Secretary urging him to allow the extradition process in relation to General Pinochet to proceed.

The STUC has a long history of involvement with the cause of democracy in Chile, going back to the period in the aftermath of the 1973 coup when we facilitated the resettlement in Scotland of Chilean refugees, and the Rolls Royce workforce refused to work on jet engines destined for the Chilean air force.

The decision of the House of Lords that Senator Pinochet does not enjoy immunity on the basis of his having been a head of state is highly significant for the way in which legality operates internationally.

There have been calls for General Pinochet to be allowed to return to Chile on compassionate grounds because of his age. I will resist the temptation to refer at length to the thousands who have had no opportunity to grow old because they died on his orders, and restrict myself to the clear argument that compassion, if it is to be exercised, should come at the stage of sentencing, not prior to any trial.

The decision of the House of Lords has given hope and encouragement to the many people, not just in the United Kingdom, who have felt that redress through the rule of law is

exercised only by the powerful against the powerless.
BILL SPEIRS
General Secretary
Scottish Trades Union Congress
Glasgow

Sir: In the wake of the decision of the Law Lords that the Spanish request for extradition of General Pinochet can go forward, a number of Conservative MPs have used various media platforms to draw an analogy between Pinochet and republican and loyalist prisoners in Northern Ireland released early under the Good Friday agreement. They have tried to construct an argument that deals made as part of wider political settlements should be allowed to stand without the intervention of foreign judges or governments.

They must not get away with this. In terms of no less a fundamental principle than the rule of law itself, it does not stand up to scrutiny. In the case of the Northern Ireland terrorists, though not in that of Pinochet, the law has rightly taken its course.

Sir: I am delighted that Anthony Wood (Letter, 26 November) thinks that the "unelected monarch... speaks for the entire population". I don't. Seeing as we disagree, can we have a vote on it?
THE REV DAVID E FLAVELL
Liverpool

Sir: Philip Hensher's article about highly able children ("Leave those brainy kids alone", 27 November) would have been applauded by none other than Bernard Shaw. In 1892 he wrote a review of Dame Clara Butt, then a student at the Royal College of Music. "If Miss Butt has sufficient strength of mind to keep her eyes, ears and mind open in the artistic atmosphere of the Royal College, without for a moment allowing herself to be

They did not, unlike Pinochet, grant immunity to themselves. Indeed, unlike Pinochet, they have not been granted immunity at all. Unlike Pinochet they have all stood trial; unlike Pinochet they have all been convicted; unlike Pinochet, they have all served time and their convictions stand. It is to be hoped that Jack Straw will not be seduced by such spurious arguments.
MARK RAWSON
Oxford

Sir: General Pinochet's health (and thus his ability to stand trial) is not an issue which should be decided by the Home Secretary. That would be too early in the judicial process and, if extradition were to be denied on those grounds, would become what everyone remembered about this case. It is better that his ability to stand trial be decided by the Spanish court at the time of his arraignment.

Similarly, it is very important for the development of international law in this area that the UK delivers a "clean" decision based

solely on the legal merits of the case and does not let the waters be muddied by political or trade considerations.
PETER J HOLDEN
Marlborough, Wiltshire

Sir: The old colonial boys are on the rampage again. The pressure on Chile to condone the extradition of General Pinochet to the colonial power can only rankle among the now free citizens of Latin America.
DR M B J MCGRATH
Cahir, Co Tipperary, Ireland

CJD warnings

Sir: Steve Connor's report "Cystitis drug may help to prevent CJD" (26 November) helpfully publicised the need to discover whether pentosan polysulphate might prevent or arrest the development of CJD in persons already infected.

Are the Department of Health taking notice of this drug due to Dr Stephen Dealler's very noisy methods of goading officialdom? Over the decades, as a scientist, I may have mistakenly chosen to use

quieter, more carefully reasoned methods for suggestions, warnings or criticisms on CJD-related topics – of my several attempts, only my 1976 warning of CJD-contaminated human growth hormone yielded any positive official response.

I do not think that there is a shred of evidence for the assertion by Dr Dealler that the children of those who have died from human BSE are at higher risk of also being infected. Needless distress will result from his statement. Is such hype needed to provoke official action? Put more generally, do those with a poor "signal-to-noise ratio" tend to become government advisers?
DR A G DICKINSON
Lasswade, Midlothian

Winslet's wedding

Sir: I cannot comment on the other instances mentioned in Emma Cook's sneering article "How lo-fi can you go?" (25 November) but I can speak with some authority about Kate Winslet's wedding. It was as near a normal wedding as someone in Kate's position was going to be allowed and it was thoroughly genuine. I try to ensure that each couple marrying in my church do so in the style most appropriate to them, and I am quite clear that we achieved that aim in Jim and Kate's case. If they had wanted opera singers, string quartets, costumes and stage sets we could have accommodated them, and it would have been splendid, but it would not have reflected the people that they are.

I realise that you cannot libel a building, but to describe All Saints, Downshire Square, as a "quaint little local church" is almost actionable: it is a sumptuous Victorian Gothic basilica which seats five hundred, as a moment's research would have told Ms Cook. West Reading may not be Knightsbridge, but it is possible to have style outside the capital.
FR HENRY EVERETT
Vicar, All Saints, Downshire Square
Reading, Berkshire

IN BRIEF

taught (a process which instantly stops the alternative process of learning), she may make a considerable career for herself.
ROGER VIGNOLES
London NW5

Sir: Ben James (letter, 26 November) asks for a "review of the decision to open subsidiary branches [of Parliament] in Wales and Scotland". The shareholders in both areas called for such branches themselves, having been heartily sick and tired of the poor service Head Office has been providing for centuries. And indeed, both countries had thriving businesses of their own before

the aggressive takeover strategies of England plc put paid to them.
ADAM RYKALA
Paisid Cymru
Blaenau Gwent

Sir: On page two of the Weekend Review (28 November) a letter from Michael O'Hare gives examples of the Americanisation of the UK. On page one, the feature "I have seen the future" contains these pearls: "Christmas is slated to bring yet more goodies." (Why should Christmas be criticised for that?); and "The Rugrats Movie has snuck up from behind" (Is this some arcane irregular form of the verb "to snack"?).
PHILIP DELNON
Swanscombe, Kent

Leukaemia children

Sir: The Leukaemia Research Fund has been greatly saddened to learn of the death of Georgina Horlock. Despite all the pressures on her time, Georgina's mother, Nicola, has given selfless and invaluable support to the fundraising efforts of the Leukaemia Research Fund.

It is unfortunate that reports in your paper and in *The Independent* on Sunday have contained errors of fact which may unnecessarily alarm the parents of other children with leukaemia. *The Independent* on Sunday has stated that about 1,200 children a year are diagnosed with leukaemia. Happily the true figure is about 420 cases a year.

More seriously, the impression is given (report, 30 November) that within the last five years bone-marrow transplants have become the treatment of choice for childhood leukaemia. This is not the case. Some two-thirds to three-quarters of all children with acute leukaemia will have an excellent response to chemotherapy. The relatively more toxic and dangerous bone-marrow transplant approach is reserved for children identified as having high-risk leukaemia or for children, like Georgina, who have relapsed. The article further implies that long-term follow up treatment is a new approach, whereas this was introduced about 30 years ago.

There is little or no evidence to support the assertion that every last leukaemia cell must be destroyed for treatment to be successful. This is the subject of ongoing research but there is historical evidence to suggest that cure is not dependent on a strategy of total annihilation of all leukaemia cells.

Although there has been major progress in treatment of childhood leukaemia, there is much work still to be done. Education of the public has a valuable part to play, but it is vital that the information is timely and accurate.
KENNETH CAMPBELL
Leukaemia Research Fund
London WC1

Bottom of the list

Sir: Michael Cooper (letter, 28 November) rightly points out that the closed list system precludes independents like Martin Bell ever being elected. But this is only the half of it.

In our parliamentary system it is candidates who stand for election, and there is a list of requirements and exclusions that control who can and cannot stand. In this respect, parties are not registered or formally recognised in law, so since when have they become an electable entity? If the constitution is to be opened up like this, we must know what organisations can and cannot take part.

Another key point arises from the fact that we, the electorate, will learn who will represent us only after the election. Will this new type of representative be governed by the same rules as apply currently to candidates? At what stage are they to be screened and by whom?
MAX BERAN
Didcot, Oxfordshire

No going back

Sir: Ed Clarke's omelette (letter 30 November) will not unscramble back into eggs because of the entropy (irreversibility) created in the process of its manufacture. A better measure of the passage of time and its associated irreversibility is to ponder the claim, "Nuclear electricity will be too cheap to meter." May I have a research grant please?

PROFESSOR A PORTEOUS
Faculty of Technology
The Open University
Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire

Correction

The extract quoted in the first paragraph of *Saturday's Cold Call* with Auberon Waugh was wrongly attributed to Sebastian Faulks. It was in fact written by Julian Barnes. We apologise to both writers.

Why General Pinochet's a better bet than Jeremy Clarkson

THE SPECULATION over the identity of the Poet Laureate has not exactly boiled up, but it has at least passed into that stage which is more interesting to every warm-blooded Britisher – the betting stage; and odds are now being offered on virtually every conceivable candidate. As I am a bit short of ready in the run-up to Christmas, I am going to start a book on the leading candidates, and I invite you all to send huge wagers to me.

The main runners, with a brief description of each one's history and likely appeal, are as follows...

5/1 Benjamin Zephaniah: Traditional Anglo-Rasta-style rant-dub-poet, whose live appearances are always exciting. Poet Laureates, of course, do not make live appearances, so

this may be a doubtful advantage. On the other hand, if Zephaniah were to be nominated Poet Laureate, he might well insist on doing live gigs for all royal occasions, and things could change dramatically. His election would appeal enormously to ethnic minorities, as he is black, though not a woman. It would also appeal to the Jewish community. He is not Jewish, but he has two Jewish names, which helps.

John Hegley: A much-published and much-loved younger poet. He has written much poetry in which members of his family are seen darkly as sources of trouble and angst, and this might well appeal to the Queen. He would also be the first Poet Laureate to have written extensively about wearing specta-

cles, and I think this would also appeal to the Queen.

8/1 Wendy Cope, Fiona Pitt-Kethley, Beryl Bainbridge: Many people feel it is time to have a woman as Poet Laureate, in the spirit of positive discrimination, and Cope and Pitt-Kethley are the obvious ones. Beryl Bainbridge is included because people feel so sorry for her after not getting the Booker Prize. The fact that she does not write poetry should not deter you from sending me money to place on her

10/1 Andrew Motion: The respectable academic choice. He has written a life of Philip Larkin, who ever, one thought should have been the last Poet Laureate, which may or may

not bode well. Lots of people remember his best-selling pop single, "Poetry in Motion", which,

similarly, may or may not bode well.

15/1 "Sir" Roger McGough: Roger has indicated privately that, if he was made Poet Laureate, he could never justify it to fellow Liverpudlians like Brian Patten or, indeed, to ex-members of The Scaffold, and that he would far prefer a simple knighthood. But he is in with a shout.

20/1 Sir Tim Rice: He has privately indicated that he has got a knighthood already but that it would be nice to have a laureateship to go along with it. The money that's involved is so tiny as to be unmeasurable on Sir Tim's bank account. On the other hand, it would make a most unusual tax loss.



MILES KINGTON
He'd be the first Poet Laureate to have written about specs; this would appeal to the Queen

not bode well. Lots of people remember his best-selling pop single, "Poetry in Motion", which,

similarly, may or may not bode well.

25/1 The late Ted Hughes: There is a persistent lobby in favour of Ted Hughes, who many people think cannot be replaced and who would be well honoured by posthumous retention. Those who protest that he is no longer likely to produce poems to mark royal birthdays might usefully remember that this is no bad thing.

30/1 Richard Branson's Virgin Poem Factory: It is widely thought that Tony Blair may wish to have a hand in the selection of the next Poet Laureate. If he opts for a people's poet, it will almost certainly be one of the afore-mentioned, but if he decides to put it out to tender, then Richard Branson's Virgin Poem division will be in with a good chance.

66/1 Liz Lochhead, Irvine Welsh etc: Normally Scottish poets would be in with a good shout, but at a time of imminent semi-independence it would be too dangerous to select someone who would also be in the running for Scotland's very own Poet Laureate.

80/1 General Pinochet: It is a little-known fact that the Poet Laureate cannot be extradited for any offence committed abroad, so Pinochet's supporters are moving heaven and earth to get him elected.

100/1 Clive James, Pam Ayres, Kevin Turey, Jeremy Clarkson, Dame Edna etc

Please send SAE for full details

هكذا من الاصل

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At last, education is not a political battleground

TODAY'S PUBLICATION of examination league tables is no longer the cue for party political arguments. This is a welcome sign of a new consensus on education policy: as the public debate shifts to the mechanics of teaching and the details of raising schools' performance, so the ideology that so marred the Seventies and Eighties has been fading into the background.

Establishing homework clubs, wiring schools to the Internet, fixing buildings, lowering speed limits for traffic around schools: these seem to be the new minutiae on which schools will be judged. It is as if the great set-piece confrontations over "child-centred learning", grammar schools, selection and coursework have exhausted all the passion of politicians and professionals alike.

The Conservatives do not seem to be interested in opposing the Government's education policies. Proposals for paying teachers by results, in order to attract outstanding graduates to the teaching profession, were circulating in Conservative circles just before the election.

The Prime Minister is skilled at appropriating the political middle ground. New Labour promotes with zeal the same league tables the Tories initiated; the determination to tackle failing schools would have been the same whichever party was in power. Mr Blair has seized the "radical centre" he so covets; the Government's decision to defer to local parents' wishes on selection at 11-plus is a masterly example of this.

The Government knows that the teaching unions are no longer the unassailable vested interest they once were; for one thing, New Labour has skillfully detached the more radical National Union of Teachers from the other unions. It was the NUT alone which yesterday protested at the plans for performance-related pay. David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education, can afford to ignore it, which union has ever come out on strike to resist a hefty pay rise for a good many of its members?

Given the Government's plans to spend more on schools, and Mr Blunkett's obvious emotional commitment to make sure that all children have access to the best education, the left has been silenced. But the right, so passionate for so long about the threat to "standards", also seems to have melted away. No longer does any serious politician envisage a "grammar school in every town", as John Major did; no longer are teachers met with a stream of invective from fashionable academe.

This new consensus opens up possibilities. The devaluation of teaching has become a critical problem, one which dogmas of right and left could not solve. The right would make teachers guardians of an unattainable past, while the left would expose them to classes without the necessary ability to demand discipline from their pupils.



Education policy must now rebuild the public's confidence in teachers, and their confidence in themselves.

The gains of peace in our classrooms are clear: rising standards of literacy and numeracy for our children. The gains can already be seen in today's league tables, and the increase in pupils gaining top grades in their GCSEs and A-levels. Those gains are real and measurable – and the detail on specific schools, regions and types of schooling would never have been available without agreement that collating the information was desirable. The tables will be even more detailed and useful in future, when the results achieved by each school will be related to the ability of the children when they entered that school.

Britain's failure to educate itself as well as its competitors has been a cause of social decay and economic decline. If we can now ignore the extremists who would divert us into futile arguments about selection and teaching methods, so much the better. The Government has fostered that new consensus: it should be congratulated.

An archaic law to deal with a puerile action

THE APPEARANCE of Peter Tatchell in a magistrates' court yesterday tells us more about the Church of England than it does about Mr Tatchell.

His invasion of Archbishop Carey's pulpit during his Easter sermon was childish and counter-productive, fixing in the public mind an image of gay rights campaigners as irresponsible extremists. But the laws under which he stands accused are a throwback to Britain's feudal past. Mr Tatchell has been charged under section 2 of the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Act of 1860, a law that originated in the Brawling Act of 1551. What nation allows the modern problem of non-violent protest to be tackled under arcane legislation covering "indecent behaviour in a church"?

Those two Acts give all churches a protection that has

little grounding in either logic or justice. Company directors have no such protection during board meetings. This is not the only example of Christianity's protected status. It is only the Christian religion that enjoys protection under the blasphemy laws, a standing insult to citizens who profess other faiths.

The Church of England itself enjoys too many exemptions from statute law. Complaints against the clergy are dealt with by consistory courts rather than industrial tribunals. Bishops have the automatic right to sit in the House of Lords – other religions have to rely on government discretion in choosing who sits there. Many bishops are admirable, but they would be better chosen on the same basis as those from other faiths. The bravery of the Bishop of Edinburgh, who has spoken in defence of Mr Tatchell – if not his tactics – would make him the first candidate.

Mr Tatchell's actions have not done his own cause much good; but they have highlighted privileges outdated in a truly "modern" nation.

When will Paddy's party realise it does agree with Tony Blair?

LATER TONIGHT the Liberal Democrat MPs in the House of Commons will file into the lobbies – alongside the Hagues, the Redwoods and the mad Pinocchistas of the New Forest – to vote against the Government's Queen's Speech. This act of opposition was described by one anonymous senior Lib Dem source as an assertion of separate identity.

This is all rather depressing. It is barely two weeks since Tony and Paddy signed a little billet-doux speaking of their regard for each other, and their plans to expand the role of the Joint Consultative Committee (you know, the one which is discussing constitutional change) to cover other issues. "This will be an important step in challenging the destructive tribalism that can afflict British politics," they trilled. Their aim was "to ensure the ascendancy of progressive politics in Britain".

Amen. For nearly 20 years what a Lib Dem or a centrist Labourite might have thought they saw in Britain was the trampling over liberal and progressive values by a Conservative Party maintained in power by an enriched and desperately self-interested third of the electorate. Even in its attenuated, Majorite form, the Tory party held out against the modernisation of the British political system, its devolution, and against openness. This was made possible, in part, by the division in the ranks of those opposed to the Conservatives, and in part by the agonisingly slow process of change within Labour.

Since May 1997, a substantial part of what constituted the Liberal

DAVID AARONOVITCH
Many voters want to see precisely the kind of organisation that embraces both Blair and Ashdown

to have acted as a goad to the Lib Dems. "The trouble is," as someone said to me yesterday, "the voters don't really understand the notion of constructive opposition."

So pretences are being sought for voting "No" tonight. At first, these were slightly desultory. The Lewes Lib Dem MP Norman Baker, told the House that: "We do not disagree with much in the Queen's Speech, but we have made the point that a huge amount is missing from it – whether on the environment or whatever – and that is terribly important. We have great doubts about the value of the Queen's Speech for that reason." Or whatever!

It is unusual to oppose something because of what is not in it. The key question is this: would the world, in Liberal Democrat terms, be a better

place if none of the provisions of the Queen's Speech were enacted? If the answer is "No", then the decision to vote against may be seen as, at best, a capricious one. And the answer most certainly is "No".

Poor, simple voters may have difficulty with the concept of constructive opposition, but they sure as hell understand destructive opposition; opposition for opposition's sake.

One Lib Dem message that all have absorbed over the years has been the need to replace "yah-boo" politics with something more dignified and more practical. Short shifts would be offered to a party that once espoused such principles, unless it could show that its differences were great and meaningful; that there was a fundamental fissure between New Labour and Newish Liberal Democrats.

Such is the contention of magnificent, uncompromising liberals like Earl Russell, and of philosopher Michael Ignatieff. In a pamphlet, *Identity and Politics*, issued last month under the aegis of the Lib Dem-associated Centre for Reform, Ignatieff denied that Tony Blair is a liberal. *Au contraire*, Blair, "doesn't like what liberals actually stand for, which is liberating the citizen from an oppressive state."

"The liberty I'm talking about", he goes on, "has a strong conception that a community is composed of rational individuals called citizens, and that they act together in deliberation, and produce a community and a society."

Labour, however, proceeds from "a sense that somehow society is prior, that rights and responsibilities derive

from society". Worse, the Blairite wolf in sheep's clothing seeks now to neutralise liberalism with the Third Way, an attempt to suppress Britain's "ancient tradition of vigorous, antagonistic, but peaceful political argument. Liberals Awake, shouts Ignatieff, "this man [Blair] wants to put you all to sleep!"

Insofar as I understand what Ignatieff is saying, I think he is wrong. It is the collectivist part of the centre left (as some suspicious Labour MPs have correctly divined) that has most to fear from a Lib-Lab rapprochement. I see little or nothing in the Blairite prospectus (leaving aside internal party battles) that would give any problem to a modern liberal. Let us recall that one of the main Lib Dem criticisms of New Labour is for its timidity in taking away tax money from the individual, in order for the state to redistribute as it sees fit.

This leaves us with the notion that the Liberal Democrats must resist too much co-operation with Labour in the name of electoral choice. Well, I am all for more parties, and for electoral reform. But it does occur to me that many voters want to see precisely the kind of political organisation that might embrace both Mr Blair and Mr Ashdown, and that is big enough to permit the use of talents as diverse as Chris Patten and Roy Jenkins.

Now what would that be called? Oh yes, the realignment of British politics. And it's a bit hard to tell us now that it was all an elaborate hoax, designed to absorb the Social Democratic Party and to win a few extra votes for old-fashioned liberals.

QUOTE OF THE DAY
"It's due to Oscar Wilde that today we can celebrate a society that generally appreciates diversity."
Stephen Fry, actor and writer

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY
"In our ideals we unwittingly reveal our vices."
Jean Rostand, French biologist

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IT IS important for every eligible voter in today's election to cast a ballot. Even in ridings where there is little doubt as to which candidate will win, each vote counts. That's because the total number of votes received by each of the parties province-wide will provide a gauge of the relative strengths of sovereignist and federalist sympathies. The results of the popular vote could therefore become a significant factor in the event there is a future referendum on Quebec's future. Democracy is one of our most precious assets in Canada. And voting is a privilege that should be exercised, not taken for granted.

Montreal Gazette, Canada

LIBERAL PARTY leader Charest stands firm on the fact that another referendum is something to be avoided. Bouchard of the sovereignist Parti Quebecois is keen to hold another one – even if he has to

MONITOR
ALL THE NEWS OF THE WORLD
North American verdicts on the provincial government elections in Quebec, Canada

create a smokescreen by claiming that it is to promote the negotiation of Canada's social union. But the PQ has no intention of resurrecting federalism. The electorate has to give their support to Charest. He merits the confidence of all those Quebecois who are opposed to the menace that another referendum would bring.

La Tribune, Canada

QUEBEC HAS been holding a separatist sword of Damocles over Canada's head for much of the past 30 years. Twenty-two million other Canadians are tired of the dance of uncertainty. If Bouchard wins, Quebecers should think hard about whether to give him the room he needs to hold another referendum, which could drive more English speakers, business and goodwill from their province.

Chicago Tribune, US

IF MORE than half of Quebecers return a separatist government to office, it could set the stage for a snap referendum. Remember how perilously close this country came to being thrown into turmoil during the last referendum. If the separatists must win today let them face the largest federalist turnout possible. It's not only the government that's at stake. It could be the future of this country.

Ottawa Sun, Canada

PANDORA

A FETCHING press release with both the Lords emblem and the Stringfellow logo has arrived on Pandora's desk. This unlikely union has sprung from the innovative joins of the Conservative hereditary peer and poker player Lord Bethell. Bethell announces that Stringfellow is the venue for an evening reception of London's Conservative candidates for the European Parliament this week. The event will feature as guest of honour Lord Archer, "who will speak and auction a number of items for party funds". Pandora hopes, given the venue, that these are appropriate items for political fundraising. Certainly the description of the evening in the release leaves little to the imagination. Of Stringfellow it boasts: "Where better can the businessman, alone in the strange city, relax and enjoy himself after a difficult day spent on insurance and banking, or otherwise up the financial sharp end?"

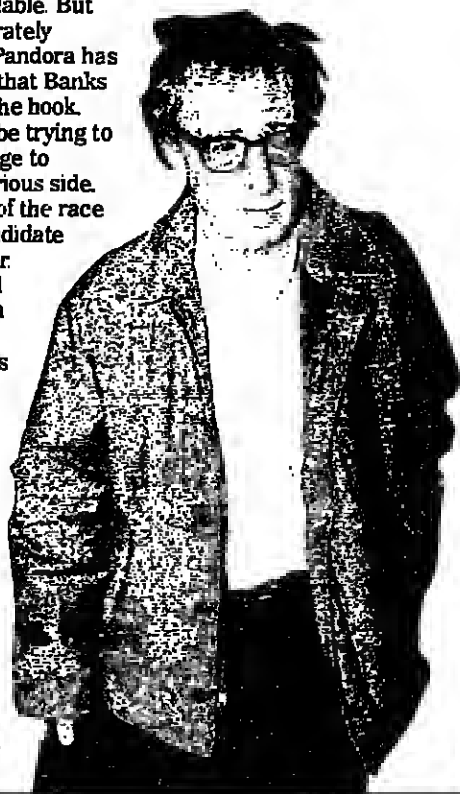
AT FIRST glance the announcement by the National Archives in the US that some more historical documents have been released may not seem to be thrilling. But the latest batch is an exception. Amongst the treasures being aired on 18 December are a map of the California gold fields, the arrest warrant for Lee Harvey Oswald and - the cherry on the cake - a letter from Elvis Presley to President Nixon asking to be appointed a federal agent-at-large. Well, the King may never have made it as an agent, but he certainly made it to being large.

AS PANDORA anticipated (in June) a new hook about the Sports Minister and House of Commons jester Tony Banks has been published. *The Wit and Wisdom of Tony Banks: A Tribute to a Parliamentary Career*, written by Iain Dale and published by Robson hooks, is now available. But despite the deliberately affectionate title, Pandora has heard mutterings that Banks is not amused by the hook. Banks appears to be trying to shed his jokey image to portray a more serious side, especially in view of the race to be Labour's candidate for London's mayor. Pandora contacted Banks's office for a comment on the book, but there was no response. Meanwhile, Pandora would like to remind readers why Banks is such a valuable asset to Parliament, with selected Banksisms such as this one: "I don't care whether I'm a minister, I don't care whether I'm a

Member of Parliament. I'll do my job to the best of my ability... I don't think I'm in any way pompous because, in the end, I don't give a toss." Loud and clear Tony, and Pandora is sure that readers will enjoy being reminded of how funny you are, at least until we get a call to say otherwise.

THE US release of Woody Allen's latest film, *Celebrity*, has given the cult auteur a platform to pass his own judgement on the rich and famous. Allen (pictured), who says that he can live with the downside of fame by avoiding TV shows and honorary degree shows at universities, gives some in the public eye the benefit of the doubt. On Rupert Murdoch, Allen comments: "I hear that he is a charming man from people that know him, and I'm sure if I met him, I might be seduced by him or find him a charming man," he tells the latest issue of the *New York Observer*. "But you know I'm not a fan of the tabloids, either on TV or print journals."

PRESIDENT CLINTON has once again come under scrutiny for his personal habits, this time over what he eats. *The Washington Post* published the Clinton menu for Thanksgiving last week, with almost as many entries at the Starr report. At Camp David, Bill, Hillary and Chelsea tucked into a starter of corn chowder, followed by turkey stuffed with cornbread dressing, roasted prime rib with horseradish cream, maple-glazed sweet potatoes, mashed potatoes, chilled asparagus, cranberry sauce, corn, squash and three kinds of pie: apple, pecan and pumpkin. Meanwhile, Downing Street has assured Pandora that there will be "nothing unusual" about the Blair's Christmas meal at Chequers this year. Cappuccino all round, then?



There's no poetry in bookselling



TERENCE BLACKER

Editors, in their terror of bullying accountants, have chosen to forget to nurture today's writers

cause a certain aura of seriousness still attends academic publishing. Presses that are answerable to a university rather than to shareholders are regarded as inherently more serious, and less vulgarly concerned with financial matters. There is also, of course, the fact that university presses wield astonishing power. The vast majority of authors who write for them have

no literary agents and, such is the desperate need of academics to sustain their careers by getting published, these people are a publisher's dream: unworried, compliant and doggedly grateful that their work will appear in print, however badly they are treated.

In the past, this imbalance of power between publisher and author caused occasional acts of malpractice (not by chance did Robert Maxwell make his fortune in this area), and a general meanness towards authors, which only occasionally came to light. Now the game has become more complicated and somewhat seedier.

The astonishing, shaming decision of the Oxford University Press to dump, without appeal or exception, its highly respected poetry list has revealed that, while still claiming to be a special case when it suits them, university presses can act with all the crass short-sightedness and greed of their colleagues in the purely commercial sector. "The poetry list was making the marketing people face in a different direction from the way they are facing when they are promoting

the *World's Classics* series or *The Oxford History of Nursing*," was how an OUP suit attempted to explain the decision to *The Independent's* John Walsh.

That phrase, indeed the whole sorry saga, explains why modern publishing is now accorded so little respect. For as long as anyone can remember, the only direction that marketing people face is up the bottoms of their powerful bookselling customers.

Although publishers were never quite as virtuous and noble as they liked to pretend, it was generally accepted that, in a healthily run house, a balance would exist between the sales and the editorial sides. One attended to turnover and profit while the other created a list that occasionally involved risk in the name of future talent. A small proportion of the easy cash made from such series as the *World's Classics* would be ploughed back into more difficult areas of contemporary writing, such as poetry.

As anyone who works in a university will testify, academics are hopeless with money and the new, fiscally responsible approach to

learning has left them floundering amid the balance sheets. But on this occasion they are in step with their colleagues in the large publishing conglomerates.

The trend there is towards quick and easy revenue-earners, books whose appeal can be grasped without difficulty by even the most money-crazed marketing person. Rather than nurture real writers who, in the future, will (all right, may) repay them with work of significance, they prefer to throw money at any politician or resting actor whose literary effort, however lame, will be relatively simple to promote. Editors, in their terror of bullying accountants, have chosen to forget that if they do not nurture today's writers, daring even to lose money over a book or two in the early stages of his or her career, they will become increasingly, disastrously dependent on the tried and tested, on passing fashion.

The refusal of academics to hold the line against commercialism is publishing's own *trahison des clercs*. Oxford University Press finds itself on the cutting edge of contemporary style culture.

Will Mr Straw join the pantheon of our heroes in Latin America?



HUGH O'SHAUGHNESSY
Now Pinochet's spell has been broken by the British, as Galtieri's was by the Falklands war

"LET HUMBLE Albion, with an awkward shame/Do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame." The (slightly doctored) lines of Alexander Pope in his aptly named *Work to Augustus* are a better text than most for the Home Secretary to ponder as he settles down this week to decide the future of Pinocet. They could remind him that, if he comes to the right decision and sends the baby-torturer of Santiago to a well deserved trial in Spain, he would join the large group of people from these islands who have, knowingly or unknowingly, done a great deal for the cause of decency in Latin America.

One can of course get excessively lyrical and overestimate the extent to which Britain has aided the cause of independence, peace and democracy in the region. I will never forget the shame that I felt a few years ago as I sat in Chatham House among a group that was made up predominantly of businessmen who had gathered to hear an Argentine minister by the name of Martinez de Hoz. He was, if I remember correctly, an Old Etonian.

At that time Argentina was in the hands of a pitiless gang of military tyrants who were throwing their political prisoners to their deaths from aircraft over the South Atlantic and doing vile things to their citizens that possibly, just possibly, might have made even Pinocet blanch. I asked the speaker a mild-mannered question about human rights in Argentina and was treated by him to a defence of torture, at the end of which the British businessmen and bankers broke into spontaneous applause.

And many people are too lyrical about Britain's role in Latin America. Innumerable are the dinners I have attended in Bogota or Caracas or Mexico which have been drawn to a somnolent conclusion by an

address from the British ambassador dwelling on the glorious contribution of British troops to the emergence of the republics from the imperial grasp of Spain two centuries ago. After all, is it not the case that to this day and in recognition of their support of Simon Bolivar, the liberator, British troops may parade through the streets of Venezuela under arms and with drums beating and colours flying?

British diplomats tend to lay less emphasis on the fact that after the wars against Napoleon ended and he was packed off safely to St Helena a host - or, perhaps better, a horde - of desperate British ex-servicemen of all ranks who were facing destitution at home swarmed across the Atlantic to seek their fortunes in battles between what they must have considered as one sort of dago and another.

Never mind, Latin America was helped to independence by British soldiers, and that independence was thereafter guaranteed by British sailors. And, much more recently, the British response to the invasion of the Falkland Islands

by the drunken General Leopoldo Galtieri ended up by bringing a good measure of democracy back to Argentina. The defeat of the Argentines by British forces was from the first a foregone conclusion if only these forces could be landed on the islands.

The wretched, untrained Argentine garrison in the Falklands, comprising as it did untrained men whose equipment and rations had been stolen by their officers, was shown after the war to have been the victims more of its own side than of the fury of an outraged Margaret Thatcher. The unconscionable hanging of the Argentine generals meant they were tossed out by popular fury in Argentina the year after the British returned to Stanley to be replaced after fair elections by a civilian president Raul Alfonsin.

To this day the British resolve to keep the Falklands Islands from Argentina unless and until the Falklanders themselves decide to throw in their lot with their neighbours over the water to the west is serving to exercise a moderating influence on Argentine leaders. Did we hear President Menem last month repeating in London his pre-election claim that he would take back the Falklands if necessary by fire and sword, an operation that could not be undertaken without vast new investment in the Argentine military and its political rehabilitation? No, thank God, we did not.

Now, with a certain amount of awkward shame, the same phenomenon is happening in Chile. It is, on the face of it, a surprising development. I spent much of Tuesday 11 September 1973 in the British embassy in Santiago. I had gone there that morning with my friend, Stewart Russell, of Reuters, on a fruitless hunt for a way to send the story of Pinochet's putsch back to London after his men had cut com-



General Galtieri, centre, and senior officers in 1982

munications with the outside world. As we munched sandwiches in the corridors many of the staff, and notably the military personnel, drank toasts and whooped with delight at the overthrow of the left-wing president, Salvador Allende, and the arrival of the smack of firm government in uniform.

This was the first day of 17 years of horror for the Chileans. Worse, it was the day when the Chilean body politic underwent a lobotomy which was not reversed until the House of Lords gave its historic verdict against Pinochet last week.

From 1973 the Chileans have been, as I saw most recently in Chile in September, in a mental daze. There were indeed noisy demonstrations before the television cameras by rich right-wing housewives most of whom banged in the cause of Pinochet the saucepans which they were unable to use with any skill themselves and which are routinely cleaned by their ill-paid domestic servants. However, these women constituted a tiny minority of the

country. The majority were opposed to Pinochet. But, lobotomised, they were incapable of throwing off their fear of another coup, either under Pinochet himself, until he surrendered command of the army in March this year, or under his successor - the handsome, rich and callous General Izurieta. After he laid his grey military cape aside Pinochet, immune from prosecution under a constitution that he wrote, took up the senatorial seat he had created for himself, one of a number which ensured that the Congress was comprehensively emasculated.

Now Pinochet's spell has been broken by the British, as Galtieri's was in 1982, and things will never be the same again. The Chileans may recover from their lobotomy and, as my friend the Chilean foreign minister has suggested, put the man on trial themselves. Humble Albion might not have set out with that in mind. But it has happened.

As the Lady said in 1982: "Rejoice, rejoice!"

We are the land of Lara Croft



PODIUM

DAVID SAINSBURY
From a speech by Lord Sainsbury of Turville, the Minister for Science, to the Social Market Foundation

I WANT to begin by stating a principle which was expressed in typically provocative terms by Professor John Kay a few years ago. Kay remarked: "The focus of industrial policy should not be on what we do worse than other people, but on what we do better."

Kay gives many examples of areas in which national competitive advantage seems to have been built - fitted kitchens in Germany, financial services in London and Manhattan, automobiles in Japan, the knitwear producers and shoemakers of Italy - and asks why this has been the case. The most important reason is the opportunity which clusters of firms provide, once a critical mass has been established, for the growth and transfer of skills and knowledge within the sector. "It is on success in creating the networks which facilitate these exchanges that many competitive advantages in today's world depend," Kay concludes.

The competitive strength of each firm within the network derives from the knowledge base to which all contribute and have access. Some as-

pects of the knowledge base relevant to a particular activity are, of course, specific to that activity, but many are not, and the most important of such non-specific skill bases lies in scientific and technical training.

The levels of scientific education and achievement in British universities are as high as any in the world and this is reflected in the success of British firms in industries which depend on elite science, such as pharmaceuticals, defence electronics, biotechnology and computer software. In these areas, once the product is designed, it has for practical purposes been made. Where, by contrast, countries such as Germany and Japan stand out, is in the technical capabilities of workers further down the ability spectrum. "The first thing we need, therefore, in designing policies to enhance competitiveness, is to have a clear idea where our competitive advantages lie. We can then build upon them."

The problem with industrial policies in the past is that they have pursued the opposite of Kay's dictum. British industrial policy was based not on pick-

ing winners, but, perversely, on picking losers. Losers that we would have liked to be winners. Attempts to revive British Leyland, for example, through state intervention turned out to be a sorry failure, and predictably so.

But while we should not seek to pick winners, we at the DTI should be vitally concerned to back successful British companies. The list of Britain's leading

sectors is not particularly controversial. They include pharmaceuticals, chemicals, telecommunications, hydrocarbons, biotechnology, electrical engineering, computer software, financial services - all unequivocally knowledge-intensive activities.

It is too often said that we are not good in this country at technology transfer, but we have, in fact, been good at the transfer of elite science to the pharmaceutical, aerospace and biotechnology industries. In many of these new industries we have a strong position in world markets - an advantage we must be careful not to throw away.

For too many people, Britain has a proud heritage. We invented the steam engine, the jet engine, the Hovercraft. The names of Newton, Darwin, and Faraday are known worldwide. Our promotional activities tend to cement this view by plumping for the safe option - Stephenson's Rocket rather than the Psion Organizer.

We need instead to build up knowledge among trading partners of contemporary British hi-tech achievements. The Millennium Products ac-

tivity is useful here, in showing that the UK is still at the cutting edge of design and technology. We need to show that Britain is the home of Crick, Hawking and Dyson, of world-leading, hi-tech companies such as Oxford Instruments, BP and Glaxo-Wellcome, and of break-out discoveries such as Dolly, monoclonal antibodies and optical fibres.

I want people when they think of this country to think of such scientific achievements as Thrust, the first supersonic car, rather than Stephenson or Faraday.

I want "Lara Croft" of Eidos's Tomb Raider computer game to be an ambassador for British scientific excellence. With other themes relating to "the knowledge economy" - education, competition policy, infrastructure - the approach does indeed represent a "third way" industrial policy, one in which government assumes an enabling rather than a directive role.

A government not blinded by the white heat of technology or interested in picking winners, but concerned with a competitive framework.

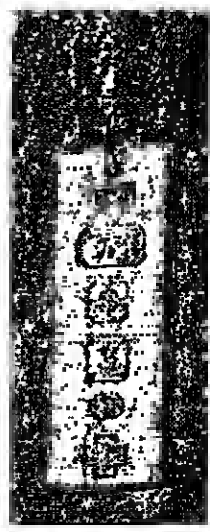
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Scotland can pay its own way

RIGHT OF REPLY

PAUL MAGEEAN

An officer of the Committee on the Administration of Justice responds to a leading article about torture

The United Nations Committee Against Torture (CAT) recently examined the record of the UK. *The Independent* said that to use the language of torture in a UK or Northern Ireland context debased the currency of universal human rights.

An obvious case of debasing human rights was heard in the Northern Ireland High Court earlier this year when David Adams was awarded £30,000 for injuries which the court found were inflicted by RUC officers at his arrest and in Castlereagh detention centre. Mr Adams's head was allegedly grabbed and pounded against the ground a number of times. He is said to have been subjected to continued beating during which his lung was punctured by one of the ribs that the police had broken. Allegedly the barrel of a rifle was driven into the back of his head, causing a severe laceration and in the detention centre, a number of officers took turns to perform running jumps directed at Mr Adams's left leg, which eventually broke. To date no officer has been disciplined, much less brought to trial.

Cases such as this illustrate the need for continued international vigilance by human rights mechanisms. While CAT did not find that the UK used torture as an instrument of policy, it did highlight the fact that regimes in detention centres create the conditions for ill-treatment. Hundreds of thousands of pounds have been paid in compensation for ill-treatment in the holding centres, yet none of the complaints made has ever been upheld.

The Government refused until this year to introduce silent video recording of interviews. Lawyers are still not permitted to attend the interviews, and audio recording, although promised, has still not been introduced. The courts in Northern Ireland and the House of Lords have found that the regime in the detention centres has been constructed to coerce suspects to speak. The supervision of human rights remains essential.

would be equivalent to about four months' growth - in which case the loss would be hardly noticeable.

So the really interesting economic question - the one I find most intriguing - is whether Scotland might achieve the sort of "run for growth" that Ireland has achieved in recent years. I suppose I should at this stage disclose where I, as the Americans would say, am coming from: I am an Anglo-Scot, brought up mostly in the Republic of Ireland and educated in Edinburgh and Dublin. If you knew Ireland in the Fifties and Sixties, and know Scotland now, you can see many parallels. Might Scotland follow the experience of Ireland in the Fifties and Sixties and be an area of relative economic stagnation? Or might it become a European economic tiger, as Ireland is now?

Part of the answer must lie with the European Union, for it has been massive EU transfers that have jump-started Ireland's burst of growth. If you make transfers of up to 7 per cent of GDP into a country, year after year, it would be pretty odd were there not to be an economic boom. Those transfers will not go on for ever. But Ireland has other strengths: high levels of education, a strong, exportable culture, and a business-friendly tax environment for foreign business. Scotland already has the first two and could develop the third. It might also develop a more tax-friendly environment for indigenous business too: encouraging local businesses to expand, rather than new foreign ones to come in, has wisely become a new focus of policy in Scotland.

Scotland would not have the benefits of big EU transfers - at least not on Ireland's scale - nevertheless there is another reason to expect a modest economic improvement, or at least no under-performance, were it to be independent. This is that small countries are no longer at an economic disadvantage to bigger ones.

The big argument for having a large country is economies of scale: a large country means a large market. But as world trade increases, it becomes possible for small countries to reap economies of scale too. EU membership automatically gives a country a much larger market, but even without it, small countries can prosper. Look at Switzerland (7 million) or Norway (4.4 million). If Quebec votes to go it alone (as it may well do) it would be fielding a population of 7.5 million. Go down to the size of Iceland or Barbados, both at a quarter of a million, and you probably do carry some penalty for being so tiny. But at 5 million Scotland would be a normal smaller nation.

Should it therefore do the full Monty and go for complete independence? That surely is a decision for Scottish people, in Scotland, not for part-Scots living mostly in London. But what we can say is that there is no powerful economic argument against it, if that is indeed what the people want to do.



The Queen yesterday examines a 15th-century harp reputedly played by Mary, Queen of Scots at the new Museum of Scotland



HAMISH MCRAE

There is no powerful economic argument against Scotland going for full independence

ST ANDREW'S Day, and Scotland chooses the English Queen to open the new Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh, the building that at last gives the country a single place where it can house the treasures that define its past national identity: from the Pictish Jewels to an 1806 Newcomen beam engine.

It is coincidence, but the opening happens amidst a turmoil of questions about the definition of Scotland's future identity. Down in London the creation of the Scottish assembly is seen in party political terms: is whatever is happening good, bad or indifferent for the Labour party? But as anyone who has spent much time across the Border this autumn will know, in Scotland it is a time of wonder and worry: is something seismic starting to happen, something as important as the union of the two parliaments in 1707, that will lead to an independent Scotland on the model (more or less) of the Republic of Ireland?

Unsurprisingly, much of the current debate has been about money - as indeed was the debate in 1707 - but about money in a curiously static way. The viability of an independent Scotland has been dissected in terms of the amount of money that Scotland receives in public spending from the UK as a whole, and the amount it raises in tax. Thus Donald Dewar in a lecture a couple of weeks ago dwelt on the costs of a break-up of the union, of "reinventing in Scotland everything from Customs and Excise to the Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce, from the Benefits Agency to the Foreign Office, from National Insurance to the National Debt".

True, Mr Dewar went on to argue in favour of the union in political terms as well - "Is there really a crying need for a separate seat at the UN?" - but in so far as the debate is about economics, it is about dividing up the cake, rather than making a bigger one.

The reason for this, I think, is simply that there are good figures for tax revenues and public spending for Scotland, so you can have a good, meaty debate rather than an airy-fairy one. Just a couple of weeks ago the Scottish Office published "Government Expenditure

and Revenue in Scotland 1996-1997" which did show that Scotland benefited from more spending per head than the UK as a whole: it has 8.7 per cent of the UK population and gets 10.1 per cent of spending.

That amounts to a gap of £4bn, not allowing for North Sea oil. The calculations then depend a bit on the proportion of oil revenues ascribed to Scotland, but even if you were to give Scotland the lot, there would still be a gap. During the early Eighties Scotland was running a large fiscal surplus, but given the present price of oil, an Eighties-style

bonanza looks decidedly unlikely. That is the static argument. The dynamic one is surely more interesting, and more useful as a guide to the future. It falls into two parts. The first is whether, were Scotland to be fully independent, it could use independence to fine-tune its tax system and to use public spending more appropriately. For example, could it not use tax incentives to attract foreign investment in the way Ireland has done? The Scottish bodies that encourage inward investment have done a good job, but they have to operate within nar-

rower boundaries than their counterparts in the Republic of Ireland. Meanwhile on the spending side, surely a locally run civil service could extract a bigger bang for its bucks than a body that has to answer to the Treasury in London. Does Scotland need, in Donald Dewar's phrase, to "reinvent" its version of the Foreign Office? Well, yes - as Ireland has. But it would not necessarily feel the need, say, to maintain troops in Germany, or for that matter, Northern Ireland. So there would be economies here, as well as some additional costs.

The second part of the dynamic argument is even more important. Let's assume that an independent Scotland would be a couple of billion worse off in purely fiscal terms. The country's GDP is roughly £70bn. Assume 3 per cent growth and the country would be losing the equivalent of one year's growth - or rather, having to attribute all the growth of one year towards higher public spending. People would notice that, for they would feel a bit poorer as a result. But were Scotland to manage the growth rates of Ireland through the Eighties it

Reconciling town and country

TUESDAY BOOK

TOWN AND COUNTRY
EDITED BY ANTHONY BARNETT AND ROGER SCRUTON,
JONATHAN CAPE, £12.99



The myth of the country is debunked in 'Town and Country' *The Mirror*

A NODDING acquaintance with the lives of the many eminent contributors to this symposium reveals that they are less typecast by locality than the Countryside March might suggest. Here are anarchist ramblers from Suffolk hamlets and urban academics defending the bunt. Whatever other issues this book debates, it is not, mercifully, predicated on some mythic stand-off between ignorant townies and sagacious rural natives. As George Monbiot and Ian McEwan write in their different ways, the rural fabric of the nation is legally, morally and aesthetically a common inheritance - a refuge to which all our imaginations retreat. Monbiot argues further that rights of access and participation based on this principle would be the best possible way of recruiting legions of concerned guardians.

But that is the nub of the argument. Support for that idea as a vague

matter of national heritage collapses when it comes to practical policy. So we have what has come to be called the crisis of the countryside: a network of social, economic and ecological problems. From the rural perspective, it is seen as a consequence of the "urban jackboot": collapsing farms, too much housing, too little housing, toxic food, a ruined landscape...

One has only to begin this familiar litany to realise there are two sides to most of the countryside's problems. Villages are losing their ancient lineages but would die if it were not

for the loathed "incomers". The whole context of food, ecology and rural employment might have been different if only more farmers had asserted their own skills and said no to the agro-chemical industry. The town isn't to blame but perhaps the City is. But which is the road out?

Town and Country is good on food, with an uplifting essay by Hugh Raven on the many new small-scale trading structures across the land. But one has only to read this, and the many other essays that touch on farming and its possible futures, to become aware of one huge omission. Nowhere does anyone define what the countryside is. Most assume it is where farming happens; or, more evasively, that you know it when you're there.

Can this really be true in the light of the immense changes documented by this book? Drive out of any town, past the golf courses, country parks, nature reserves, overgrown commons, smallholdings and paddocks. Do these form the new countryside, and should we be pleased? If not, what are they? It matters not just because they are growing at the expense of farmland, but also because they offer up many new kinds of relationship between humans and nature.

Nature does not get much direct attention here. Without exception the contributors describe the countryside - and often nature itself - as an "artefact". It is a dated, anthropocentric view, rather like that of a Victorian person who sees nature in the need of redemption by mankind. Natural or not, the countryside is

now a congenial setting for more than just the light industry that Paul Hirst rightly urges as a replacement for agriculture. A whole new caste of villagers - telecottagers, craftspeople, artists, smallholders - is beginning to use the landscape as thoroughly as farmers. And a place where a growing landscape is dwelt in and employed is one definition of countryside.

There is not much on the character of the village here, which is odd (what a boon John Berger would have been). But the debate about the future of towns is the best thing in it, especially John Gummer's and Tim Mars's defences of "mixed development" - which could be a 21st-century version of William Morris's wood-encircled new villages.

Much that is fine, constructive and provocative in this book testifies to the diversity of life and opinion in both kinds of landscape. Colin Ward writes on the rich tradition of do-it-yourself building, and David Coffey (an urban vet) argues convincingly that the entire edifice of veterinary welfare turns all animals into human play-

things. A marvellous piece by Libby Purves on "light pollution" turns into a plea for the importance of the numinous, as glimpsed in the night sky. And there's a good retelling of the rural myth that blames the miners' strike for BSE, as there wasn't enough energy about then to properly sterilise cannibalistic animal feed!

The editors' conclusions are fine pieces, too: Anthony Barnett on the interdependence of town and country; Roger Scruton (until he gets on his hunting horse) on the unique relationship of rural places with time. Yet in spite of its sprawling, intelligent coverage, something seems missing. Perhaps because of a nagging fear of the heinous crime of romanticisation, the countryside itself - that protean, mythic but transcendently materialist region that exerts such a hold over our consciousness - rarely shows its sensuous face from behind the statistics and theories.

RICHARD MABEY

The writer is the author of *Flora Britannica*

TUESDAY POEM

MY LIFE ASLEEP
BY JO SHAPCOTT

Everything is loud: the rasp of bed-sheets, clamour of hair-tangles, clink of teeth. Small sweat takes up residence in each crease of the body, but breathing's even, herself warm, room safe as a London room can be. The tube rumbles only metres underneath and planes for Heathrow circle on the roof. You'll find the body and all the air it exhales smellier than by day; she's kinder, more supple. Bend close to catch the delicacies of sleep, to bear skin tick, to taste the mandragora of night sweat. Lean forward and put a finger on the spot you think the dream is.

This poem comes from Jo Shapcott's new collection, *'My Life Asleep'* (Oxford University Press, £6.99)

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Captain Geoffrey Kirkby

Geoffrey Kirkby, a distinguished wartime destroyer captain, as a natural leader and an especially skilled seaman, even in that distinguished generation of destroyer captains. But though he was often the right man in the right place - three awards of the Distinguished Service Cross in three years speak for themselves - he times were not always right or him.

He got off to a cracking start as in acting Sub-Lieutenant in 1939; when the war ended he was still an acting Lieutenant-Commander. He had had what is now often referred to as a "good war", but when it ended so did many promising career prospects. That many of the deserving went no further than they did is often less a reflection on them and the fleet in which they served so well, than upon their times.

Kirkby was born in 1918 as one war was ending; when the next broke out he had just finished his Subs courses with distinction. He had joined the Navy from Taunton School in 1936, and as a midshipman, first saw sea service in the Mediterranean, in the old battleship *Malaya*. His prowess and promise were recognised by his appointment in 1939 to the new fleet destroyer *Kingston*, only launched that January. He was to serve in her until she was lost three years later.

Their short but ferocious association actively began in June 1940 and in the Red Sea, less than a fortnight after Italy decided to enter the war. Thanks to some excellent naval intelligence, which had already borne fruit, *Kingston* and her sister ships *Kandahar* and *Khartoum* were not surprised to encounter the Italian submarine *Torricelli* off Perim Island. Their attack was interrupted by an internal explosion in *Khartoum* - not due to any enemy action as is sometimes thought - but no less successful. *Torricelli* surrendered and Kirkby was sent across to seek her confidential books. The subma-

rine began to sink under him and he just got out of her conning tower in time. This effort brought his first DSC.

A year later Kirkby and his ship were involved in the evacuation first of Greece and then of Crete, when *Kingston* had the dubious distinction of operating north of the island where she was hit by a specialist German bomber squadron but earned the particular praise of the legendary Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham, then Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean Fleet.

Kingston then saw some service in the Eastern basin of the Mediterranean against the Vichy French before taking part in the Second Battle of Sirte in March 1942 when Rear-Admiral Philip Vian and his 15th Cruiser Squadron and four destroyers so nobly and notably put to flight a nominally far superior Italian force. Kirkby in *Kingston* got within three miles of the Italian battleship *Littorio* which retaliated with a 15-inch salvo, narrowly missing the destroyer and forcing her to retire to Malta. There she was sunk in dock by an air attack on 11 April, her hull ending up as a blockship. These further efforts against Italy brought Kirkby his second DSC.

Kirkby then had an unusual and interesting attachment to the Long Range Desert Group, teaching them



Kirkby (left) with Harold Wilson on board *Tiger*, 1966

of 1943. He saw intense service in the Channel and the Western Approaches, the ship sinking five E-boats and six coasters before taking an inshore role off Omaha and Gold beaches in

Kirkby went to the Far East in time for the liberation of Singapore and to become Staff Officer Operations to Flag Officer, *Malaya*, which reminded him of his first ship, and where he met the WRNS officer Daphne Spiller whom he married in 1946. He had three promising destroyer commands which pleased him. He was a legendary ship handler: he was encouragingly promoted early to Commander in 1950 but his purely naval appointments were limited. Even so, his promotion to Captain came in December 1957. After two years as naval adviser to Pakistan and nearly three as Director of Naval Equipment at Bath, he got his final seagoing command as Captain of the cruiser *Tiger*, which became an accommodation ship at Gibraltar for the fruitless discussions about Rhodesian sov-

eignty between Harold Wilson and Ian Smith in the autumn of 1966. Kirkby superintended the naval funeral of Viscount Cunningham, his wartime Commander-in-Chief, was appointed CBE and then, suddenly, it seemed to the many who had assumed that he would reach the Flag list, was retired early in 1967. Geoffrey Kirkby later joined the administrative staff of the new Bath University, where his officer-like qualities were an example to his colleagues, though at times he may have sighed for the Naval Discipline Act.

A. B. SAINSBURY

Geoffrey Kirkby, naval officer: born 26 August 1918; DSC 1940 and two bars 1942, 1944; CBE 1966; married 1946 Daphne Spiller (two daughters); died 24 October 1998.

When Kirkby went on board the surrendered Italian submarine Torricelli she began to sink under him; he just got out of her conning tower in time

celestial navigation before coming home to join *Melbrook*, one of the improved Hunt class of light destroyers, of which he found himself in command at the age of 24 in the summer

Gloria Fuertes

GLORIA FUERTES learned to read and write at the age of three, and as a teenager developed a taste for speaking in rhyming couplets. But it wasn't until her forties that she won recognition as a poet, and not until her sixties that she became the star of a daily television programme in which she told stories to children.

Behind that beaming grandmotherly face and gravelly lorry-driver's voice lay a complex Bohemian character formed in her early childhood. "I was a good girl and slender, tall and somewhat sickly. At nine I was hit by a cart and at 14 I was hit by the war."

Young Gloria used to cycle around Madrid in culottes, a divided skirt designed by her sister, wearing a tie. She bought books on the sly at the Cuesta de Moyano, a picturesque lane that slopes down beside the leafy Retiro park, lined with second-hand bookstalls. She would hide in the cubby-hole where her father worked as a doorman or portero to read and write without her mother's knowledge. "My father loved to read, he read the classics and mystical works, the lives of the saints," she recalled in her old age.

At 15 this sensitive soul lost her mother, who had tried in vain to steer her daughter towards a career in dressmaking. She worked as a typist and office secretary and in 1939 at the end of the Spanish Civil War began an association with a children's magazine, *Miravillas*, in which Fuertes created her first character, Coleta, a country girl who moves to the city to work as a nanny. She explained in her last interview:

As a child I learned to write as soon as I could so that I could write down everything that occurred to me. I'm doing something else and a sentence comes to me. I write it down and then I look at it. A seed has sprouted. I write every day, not as a discipline, something comes to me and that's it.

Towards the end of the 1940s, Fuertes joined a literary *tertulia* or

discussion group called *Postismo*, a post-war movement tinged with Surrealism among whose heroes was Max Ernst. In 1950 her first book of poems, *La Isla Ignorada* ("The Unknown Island"), was published, although she had written the title work 11 years earlier. In 1952 *Canciones para Niños* ("Songs for Children") appeared, and in 1954 *Antología y poemas del suburbio* ("Anthology and Poems from the Suburb").

Only half her work was directed to children. In the rest, according to Spain's Nobel prizewinner Camilo José Cela, "Gloria Fuertes howled like a wolf, mortally wounded. Her verses are full of grief and pain, healing and humane, bitterly sober and maliciously playful."

By 1960 she was running a public library, and won a Fulbright scholarship that took her to the United States where she taught Spanish Literature at Bucknell University in Pennsylvania until 1963. In 1962 another anthology, *Que estás en mi Tierra* ("You Are in My Land") appeared. Back in Spain she started working in children's television, including the programme that made her name in the 1970s, *Un Globo, Dos Globos, Tres Globos*, ("One Balloon, Two Balloons, Three Balloons") in which every weekday afternoon for four years she told tales and recited poems to rapt young audiences.

Among her works for adults are *Poeta de guardia* ("Poet on Watch"), *Sola en la sala* ("Alone in the Room"), *Historia de Gloria* ("Story of Gloria") - or *Gloria*, the anthology *Obras Incompletas* ("Incomplete Works") and her most recent work, *Mujer de verso en pecho* ("Woman with Verse in her Heart").

Fuertes felt things improved for her as she got older. "For me all time past was worse and the good thing about the past is that it has passed. She was, none the less, of a happy disposition, and was surprised by the depression that engulfed her when - a dedicated chain-smoker - she was diagnosed two months ago as suffering from lung cancer.

Some of her couplets hint at inner torment: "If God values a tear more than a prayer, I'll have a throne in heaven". But her dark thoughts were lifted by irony: "I triumphed with my poetry but I wasn't present at my triumph. If I've something better to do, I won't attend my funeral either."

ELIZABETH NASH

Gloria Fuertes, poet and storyteller: born Madrid 28 July 1918; died Madrid 27 November 1998.



'Woman with verse in her heart'

Clive Richardson



Richardson was one of the post-war 'legends of light music'

LIGHT MUSIC is a much maligned area of popular music, difficult to classify and frequently hard to find in the record catalogues or on modern radio stations. Yet for some 30 years this was the music that filled the media, at the cinema, on record and over the airwaves - indeed, the BBC had an entire radio station named after it.

Clive Richardson was the last of the pioneers of light music. With dozens of lively descriptive works like "Beachcomber", "Locomotion", and "Holiday Spirit", he laid down the blueprint for a style of music that influenced a generation of composers.

Born in Paris (for reasons that remain a little hazy) to English parents in 1909, the young Clive was educated at Harrow School and despite showing prodigious talent in matters musical from an early age began training to become a doctor. Wisely switching to music, he enrolled at the Royal Academy of Music, where he studied a variety of instruments, including piano, and took conducting tuition from Sir Henry Wood and composition with Norman O'Neill. He swiftly achieved his LRAM and ultimately became a fully fledged Associate (ARAM) which remained a source of great pride to him.

Through the early 1930s he freelanced as an arranger, working on

André Charlot revues such as *Please* (1933), starring Beatrice Lillie, and *Spread It Abroad* (1936), the show that introduced "A Nightingale sang in Berkeley Square", sung by Dorothy Dickson. He also toured as one of the pianists in "Harold Ramsay's Six Piano Symphony" and perhaps more rewarding as accompanist/arranger for the cabaret star Hildegarde (singer of "Darling je vous aime beaucoup"), travelling with her across Europe and America.

In 1937 he joined the Gaumont British Film Company at Lime Grove, and under the musical director Louis Levy he composed and orchestrated sections of some 100 films, in collaboration with such future greats of the light-music world as Charles ("Dick Barton") Williams, Jack ("Picture Parade") Beaver and Hubert ("Cornish Rhapsody") Bath. Seldom was a complete score composed by one person and invariably Levy took sole screen credit. (Happily research is now in hand to identify who did what.)

Richardson was certainly involved in numerous Jack Hulbert and Will Hay comedies and may well have had a hand in Hitchcock's *The Lady Vanishes* (1933) and Nicholas Brodsky's score for *French Without Tears* (1939).

At the outbreak of war he im-

mediately ceased all musical activities. Already an officer in the Territorial Reserve, he was posted to a succession of Ack-Ack Battalions and served in Coventry, Manchester and Birmingham. His experiences of the bombing in these cities and both the horrors and courage that he witnessed were the inspiration for his London *Fantasia*, a short concert work in the spirit of Richard Addinsell's *Warsaw Concerto* (*Dangerous Moonlight*, 1941), and it proved to be Richardson's first popular hit (the recording with the composer at the piano accompanied by the Columbia Light Symphony Orchestra conducted by Charles Williams was a best seller in 1945/46).

Also around this time he teamed up with fellow pianist Tony Lowry (former arranger with Henry Hall's dance band) to form the duo "Lowry and Richardson - Four Hands in Harmony", an unexpectedly successful turn that toured the still-flourishing variety circuits. They made several film appearances including *My Ain Folk* (1944) and later a series of Rank films, *For Your Entertainment* (1952) featuring a performance in what must have been the tiniest studio on the lot. Two grand pianos and a troupe of dancing girls alarmingly fill the screen almost to bursting point.

The immediate post-war period saw Richardson at his most productive. In addition to the performing he was invited to work on the ITMA *U's That Man Again* radio series which featured a weekly orchestral interlude, performed by the Variety Orchestra conducted by Charles Shadwell. Uncopyrighted popular melodies, folk songs and nursery rhymes were the order of the day, and Richardson's inventive and lively new interpretations proved to be a great success. Rediscovered a few years ago in the BBC vaults, many of them were freshly recorded by the BBC Concert Orchestra and played as the centrepiece to the recent nostalgia series *Legends of Light Music*; they stand up well to this day.

Meanwhile, in the music-publishing world, several major companies began recording works on their own labels, to provide pre-packaged music to the film, radio and soon-to-be television industries. Chappell, Francis Day and Hunter and Boosey and Hawkes began commissioning mood music compositions from Richardson. The post-war boom in light music had begun.

Among dozens of gems a handful of classics are still fondly remembered by music enthusiasts of a certain age. "Holiday Spirit", for

example, composed for the Chapell's library became the theme of BBC television's *Children's News* (for Paxton publishers) was the closing march in ITMA. "The Shadow Waltz" (by a pseudonymous "Paul Dubois") became the theme to the Francis Durbridge television series, remade as the feature film *Portrait of Alison* (1954), while "Melody on the Move" gave its title and theme song to a long-running music radio series of the 1940s.

Continuing to write into the 1960s and 1970s Richardson freely acknowledged that the call for music in his style was limited in an era of pop, and he was delighted when the Chandos library recently commissioned him to compose material for a new nostalgia CD.

In 1988 he received a token of recognition from his peers when the British Association of Songwriters Composers and Authors awarded him their Gold Medal for services to the world of music, a belated acknowledgement of his exceptional work in the field of light music.

ALEXANDER GLEASON

Clive Richardson, composer: born Paris 23 June 1909; twice married (one daughter); died London 11 November 1998.

Canon Peter Boulton

PETER BOULTON was a distinguished Anglican priest, a prominent member of the General Synod and for 10 years Prolocutor (Chairman) of the Convocation of York. He was powerful among the High Church group who were unhappy at the suggestions for new ecumenical relations made by Archbishop Michael Ramsey and his successors.

Boulton conscientiously devoted his clear mind to debate in public his understanding of the catholicity of the Church of England. In the General Synod he was a frequent and courteous speaker. He attended the World Council of Churches at Nairobi and Anglican Consultative Council. He edited with Bishop Graham Leonard papers which critically assessed the efforts of the archbishops to draw closer to other churches.

He was also a hardworking parish priest in the Midlands and for 20 years vicar of Worksop. He restored the Priory Church, maintained a team able to care for his parishioners during his inevitable absences and was chairman of the Bassetlaw Council for Voluntary Services which he founded.

He promoted Church schools and youth clubs, became Diocesan Director of Education and Canon Residentiary of Southwell Minster. In 1981 his abilities were recognised by his appointment as Chaplain to the Queen and, after his retirement in 1982, he acted as chaplain to the Conference of the Canon Law Society.

His small figure and hooded eyes seemed to be an essential part of central Church committees where he was valued as a leading member

of the clergy in the Northern Province. He remained to the end in one of his own phrases "deeply devoted to the mission of the Church in this country".

Boulton was born in 1925 and educated at Pickering, St Chad's College, Durham, and Ely Theological College. He served in the Navy during the Second World War and was ordained in 1950 to serve in the Tractarian parish of Copenhall in Crewe, the town to which he eventually retired. In 1967 he began his notable ministry at Worksop Priory from which he also did his central church planning and work.

At Worksop he carried out a major restoration of the fabric of the church and was meticulous in maintaining traditional worship. He developed the Church schools, youth clubs, hous-

ing associations and other voluntary services in the town. He encouraged local authority welfare services and voluntary bodies to work together for the good of the community. Some in Worksop grieved that this able, caring man felt he had to spend so much time on ecclesiastical planning and committees in London.

In a notable debate in General Synod in 1987 he urged the Church to devote itself to the "improvement and development of the Welfare State... It has Christian roots". He electrified the Synod by describing how the families of striking miners were forced to exist on £5.15 a week "by a vindictive administration supporting a hard-faced NCB". He was alert to social injustice in his Midlands industrial parishes and was prepared to come down off the fence in denouncing



Alert to social injustice

them, claiming he spoke "for the ordinary people of this land... very much sheep without a shepherd."

His last years were saddened by the rift he allowed to develop be-

tween his thinking and that of women prepared to serve the Church. He was voted out of the Chair of Prolocutor of the York Convocation in 1990. He did not warm to the majority in the Church of England and other churches who believed that the bar to the ordination of women should now be lifted.

He found it easier to develop his thinking about society than he did to develop his understanding of the theology of priesthood. It was a surprise that only four years after the ordinations began in 1994 no less than 2,000 women had answered their vocation to be ordained, many serving in the most demanding parishes.

His memory is cherished by many who did not share his views but who respected this hardworking servant of Church and society. Char-

acteristically during his retirement, he set out to gather another degree - in Canon Law.

ALAN WEBSTER

Peter Henry Boulton, priest: born 12 December 1925; ordained deacon 1950, priest 1951; Assistant Curate, Copenhall St Michael, Crewe 1950-54; St Mark Mansfield 1954-55; Vicar, Clifton Colliery Village, Nottinghamshire 1955-60; St John the Baptist, Carlton 1960-67; Worksop Priory 1967-87; Honorary Canon of Southwell 1975-87; Canon Residentiary of Southwell Minster and Diocesan Director of Education 1987-92 (Emeritus); Prolocutor of York Convocation 1980-90; Chaplain to the Queen 1981-95; married 1953 Barbara Davies (three sons); died Crewe, Cheshire 17 November 1998.

J. D. Sumner

ALTHOUGH ELVIS Presley was the King of Rock'n'Roll, he was also a leading gospel singer and he won Grammys for his sacred recordings. He was friendly with many gospel musicians and he worked for several years with J.D. Sumner, the deep voice who can be heard prominently on Elvis's posthumous chart-topper, "Way Down". Elvis said on several occasions that Sumner was his favourite gospel singer and when they were together, it was Elvis who was in awe of him.

John Daniel Sumner, nicknamed Jim Dandy or J.D., was born in Lakeland, Florida in 1924. Like so many Southern singers of his generation, he sang in church from an early age, and when his voice broke he became the bass singer with the Sunshine Boys. They often worked in Memphis where Sumner befriended the young Elvis Presley, sneaking him into the concerts when Elvis could not afford the 50 cents admission.

The white gospel music of the day was akin to country music crossed with barbershop quartets. Most of the acts were male quartets featuring four-part harmonies. In 1954 a leading gospel group based in Memphis, the Blackwood Brothers Quartet, lost two members in a plane crash and Sumner joined the group as their bass singer. Elvis had thoughts of joining the group himself and, in 1955, shortly after making his first records, he appeared in a gospel concert with them.

In 1956 the Blackwood Brothers Quartet found national acclaim when they won Arthur Godfrey's television talent show. They were the favourite group of Gladys Presley, Elvis's mother, and they sang at her funeral in 1958. Said Sumner: "I have never seen a man suffer as much or grieve as much as he did at the loss of his mother."

In 1963 James Blackwood purchased a gospel music publishing company from Frank Stamps. The deal included the brand name, the Stamps Quartet, and Sumner developed this, transforming a little-known group into one of America's leading white gospel groups. He also formed the National Quartet Convention, which became the biggest event on the Southern gospel calendar.

Elvis Presley had used a former gospel group, the Jordanaires, on many of his hit recordings. When he returned to live performances in 1968, he hired yet another gospel group, the Imperials, featuring one of his favourite singers, Jake Hess. They left in 1971 following a dispute over pay with Elvis's manager, Colonel Tom Parker.

By 1971, Sumner had had enough success to write his autobiography, *Gospel Music Is My Life*. In it he wrote, "Gospel music was designed by Christian people as a means of reaching the lost. I wouldn't be on the road as much as I am, staying away from my family, if it were not so. If we can inspire people to live better lives, we've performed a ministry."



Sumner (right) backstage with Elvis in Las Vegas in 1974; he was Elvis's favourite gospel singer

Because of his various commitments, Sumner was managing, rather than singing with, the Stamps. He was also a notable gospel songwriter and among his compositions are "The Old Country Church", "Crossing Chilly Jordan", "He Means All The World To Me", "Inside The Gate" and "Lord, Teach Me How To Pray". He had a sense of fun and amused audiences with his impression of "the Gooney Bird". Because he was tall (six foot five) and dignified, it was doubly funny to see him running around on stage, and he even released an album of his comedy routines.

death in August 1977 and Sumner's voice can be heard on many recordings including the gospel songs "Help Me" and "Why Me, Lord". On stage, Elvis would often Sumner's voice to a B-52 bomber – and that was a compliment. He looked distinctive with his grey hair and hand cupped over his ear as though he were receiving personal messages from the Saviour. Time and again, Elvis would ask him to repeat low notes.

Elvis relaxed by singing gospel favourites and, fortunately, an impromptu jam session with the Stamps was recorded in 1972. At the end of

Shortly after Elvis's death, Sumner and the Stamps released a tribute album, *Elvis Has Left The Building* (1977), and there were two further albums, *Elvis's Favourite Gospel Songs* (1977) and *Memories Of Our Friend Elvis* (1978). They were nominated for Grammy awards with the albums *Victory Road* (1990) and *Peace In The Valley* (1991) and they were featured on Tammy Wynette's final album, *Inspirational Favourites* (1998).

The group's only UK appearance came when they opened for Jerry Lee Lewis in 1980. They were booked for *Elvis In Concert* at Wembley Arena in January 1999 in which Elvis's backing musicians and singers will accompany a video of Elvis singing. Elvis, naturally, is irreplaceable but so is Sumner: few singers can hit the lowest G on the piano. He is included in *The Guinness Book of Records* as the world's lowest bass singer.

Sumner was inducted into the Gospel Hall of Fame as an individual in 1983 and with the Stamps earlier this year. He died while he was touring. As he said in his autobiography, "Gospel music is more than standing on a stage or a way to make a living. Gospel music is my life."

SPENCER LEIGH

John Daniel Sumner, singer; born Lakeland, Florida 19 November 1924; married (two daughters); died Myrtle Beach, South Carolina 15 November 1998.

'Gospel music is a means of reaching the lost. If we can inspire people to live better lives, we've performed a ministry'

Elvis heard a record by the Stamps, liked it very much, and invited the group to join him on stage – if Sumner was singing with them. "I want your '56 endings," he told him. By this, he meant the way that Sumner would run down the scale and bottom out on the lowest note he could hit.

Sumner agreed and the Stamps Quartet joined Elvis in November 1971. Their regular bass singer, Richard Starban, soon left to join the Oak Ridge Boys. The Stamps worked for Elvis until his

"Nearer My God To Thee", Elvis says, "I was singing bass, but J.D. covered me up. He wiped me out."

After Elvis's death, Sumner often gave interviews and spoke at Presley conventions. He always stressed the positive side of Presley's personality and never admitted that Elvis took anything other than prescription drugs. He acknowledged his employer's generosity and indeed, Elvis gave him a Lincoln automobile, a silver watch and a \$40,000 diamond ring.

GAZETTE

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

DEATHS

HORLICK: Georgina Suzanne Louise, on 27 November at Great Ormond Street Hospital, aged 12 years, dearly loved daughter of Tim and Nicola and darling sister of Alice, Serena, Rupert and Antonia. Funeral service to be held at St Augustine's Church, Queen's Gate, London SW7 on Thursday 3 December at 11am. No flowers please. Donations to REACTS Fund, Great Ormond Street Hospital.

WHITE: Dorothy Marian, OBE, Dearly loved wife of John and mother of Jonathan, Kevin and Richard, died on 26 November at the Royal Free Hospital, Hampstead, London. Funeral service for family and immediate friends. Donations if wished to the Relatives Association at 5 Tavistock Place, London WC1R 8SN. A Memorial Service will be held early in the new year – to be announced.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, In memoriam) are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra).

OTHER Gazette announcements (notices, functions, forthcoming marriages, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, In memoriam) are charged at £10 a line. VAT extra. Always include a daytime telephone number.

The Independent's main switchboard number is 0171-293 2000.

The OBITUARIES e-mail address is obituaries@independent.co.uk

BIRTHDAYS

Mr Woody Allen, actor, writer and director, 63; Professor Sir Norman Browse, consultant surgeon, 67; Mr Anthony Coe, former chief constable, Suffolk, 57; Mr Gordon Crosse, composer, 61; Mr Mike Denness, former Test cricketer, 58; Miss Eva Evdokimova, ballerina, 50; Mr Ian Gerken, ambassador to El Salvador, 55; Lord Glenconner, governing director, Tennants Estate, 72; Dame Alicia Markova, prima ballerina assoluta, 88; Mr Keith Michell, actor and director, 70; Miss Bette Midler, singer and comedienne, 53; Mr Saifraz Nawaz, Pakistani test cricketer, 50; Mr Gilbert O'Sullivan, singer, 52; Mr Bruce Page, writer, 62; Mr Stephen Polakoff, playwright, 46; Mr Richard Pryor, actor, 58; Maj-Gen Sir Desmond Rice, 74; Dame Mildred Riddelsdell, former senior civil servant, 85; Mr Andy Ripley, former rugby international, 51; Lord Rolf of Ipsden, president of the S.G. Warburg Group, 91; The Right Rev Peter Selby, Bishop of Worcester, 57; Mr Lee Trevino, golfer, 59; Professor Michael Williams, consultant engineer, 63.

ANNIVERSARIES

Births: Anna Comnena, Byzantine princess and historian, 1083; John Keill, philosopher and mathematician, 1671; Madame Marie Tussaud (Groszolz), waxwork exhibitor, 1761; Queen Alexandra, consort of Edward VII, 1844; Ray Henderson, composer and producer, 1896; Helen de Guerry Simpson, novelist,

1897; Mary Martin, actress and singer, 1913.

Deaths: Henry I, King, 1135; Blanche of Castile, wife of King Louis VIII of France, 1252; Lorenzo Ghiberti, sculptor, 1455; Pope Leo X, 1521; St Edmund Campion, St Alexander Briant and St Ralph Sherwin, Jesuit martyrs, executed 1581; Thomas Weelkes, composer, buried 1623; Susannah Centlivre (Freeman), playwright and actress, 1723; Alexander I, Tsar of Russia, 1825; Dr George Birkbeck, founder of Birkbeck College, 1841; Ebenezer Elliott, poet and "anti-Corn Law rhymester", 1849; Henry William Banks Davis, painter, 1914; Leopold, Count von Kalckreuth, painter, 1928; Paul-Marie Théodore Vincent d'Indy, composer, 1931; Samuel Courtauld, industrialist, 1947; Ernest John Moeran, composer, 1950; Sir Peter Henry Buck (Te Rangihirua), Maori anthropologist and statesman, 1951; John Burton Sanderson Haldane, scientist, 1964; David Ben Gurion, Israeli statesman, 1973; Stéphane Grappelli, musician and jazz violinist, 1997.

On this day: Portugal became independent of Spain, 1640; the Royal Academy of Arts was founded, 1768; Jacques-Alexandre Césaire made the first ascent in a hydrogen-filled balloon, France, 1783; Iceland became a sovereign state, but with the same monarch as Denmark, 1918; Lady Nancy Astor became the first woman to take her seat in the House of Commons as an MP, 1919; the Beveridge Report on social security was published, 1942;

hurricane force winds swept across Britain and caused widespread damage, 1966; Britain issued its first set of special Christmas stamps, 1966; the Isaac Newton telescope, largest in Western Europe, was inaugurated at the Royal Greenwich Observatory, 1967; Mikhail Gorbachev, leader of the Soviet Union, met the pope, John Paul II in the Vatican, 1989; the two pilot tunnels for the Channel Tunnel were joined, thus linking the two coasts for the first time, 1990.

Today is the Feast Day of St Aguricus or Ayr, St Alexander Briant, St Anasanius, St Edmund Campion, St Eligius or Eloy, St Ralph Sherwin and St Tudwal.

MARIUS GORING

A memorial service in celebration of the life of Marius Goring CBE FRSL will be held at St Paul's Church, Covent Garden, at noon on Thursday 14 January 1999.

ROYAL SOCIETY

Sir Aaron Klug, President, presided at the annual meeting of the Royal Society held yesterday at Carlton House Terrace, London SW1, to mark the 338th Anniversary of the founding of the Society. He presented the Society's medals, awards and prizes for scientific excellence and gave the Anniversary Address. A reception was held afterwards. Among those present were: Lady Klug; Sir Eric Ash, Treasurer, and Lady Ash; Professor J.S. Rowlinson, Physical Secretary, and Mrs Rowlinson; Professor P.G. Bateson, Biological Secretary, and Mrs Bateson; Professor and Mrs R.B. Rosp; Lord and Lady Rosp; Lord and Lady Jellicoe; Lord Perry;

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh: The President of the Federal Republic of Germany and Frau Herzog pay a State Visit. The Queen Mother visits the Royal Smithfield Show at Earls Court Exhibition Centre, London SW5; The Duke of York attends the commissioning of 700 (Merlin) Naval Air Squadron at Royal Naval Air Station Culdrose, Helston, Cornwall.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

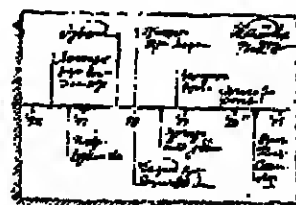
The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am.

LECTURES

National Gallery: Colin Wiggins, "Mirrors (I): Self-portraits by Lucian Freud", 1pm.

Victoria and Albert Museum: Diana Perry Aldrich, "The Renaissance Architectural Interior", 2pm. Tate Gallery: Edwin Aldrich, "England for Ever: the work of John Constable", 1pm. Wallace Collection, London W1: Rosalind Savill, "The Hertford as Collectors of Sevres Porcelain", 1pm.

University College London: Gower St, London WC1: Dr Alison Wright, "Design, Invention and New Subject Matter in 15th-century Florentine Art", 1.15pm. Exeter University: Professor David Braund, "Insiders and Outsiders: Ancient Greece, Rome and the Caucasus", 1.15pm.



HISTORICAL NOTES

MICHAEL CUMMING

A bombing system born of daydreams

CRUISE MISSILES, smart bombs, underwater launching and infra-red homing devices – what would the boys in RAF Bomber Command have made of all these mind-boggling goodies when making their way to their designated targets in the dark days and darker nights of the Second World War? To those flyers, perhaps more than to most people today, post-war inventive genius is beyond belief.

Much has been made of the implementation and the results of the so-called "area bombing" when huge areas were laid to waste in massive air raids on German cities, carried out with a not insignificant loss of life by the heavy bombers in Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Harris's command, each plane with six or seven men aboard. Was it necessary, this loss of life in the air, this destruction and slaughter on the ground?

Even now the arguments rage, but there is one dimension which is only now being considered with the emergence of more information about Oboe, the ground-controlled, blind-bombing system which was developed by scientists at the Telecommunications Research Establishment – originally based at Worth Matravers near Swanage and subsequently at Malvern.

Oboe was the brainchild of Alec Reeves, whose boss at the time, TRE Superintendent A.P. Rowe, later wrote

that it had been "born and bred from daydreams". Helping turn Reeves' ideas into reality was Dr F.E. Jones and a small team known formally within TRE as Group 4 and more usually as the Oboe group.

Oboe was unrivalled as a means of pinpointing a target, even when it was obscured by a total blanket of cloud. Most times it was the two-man, fast and high-flying, unarmed Mosquito which used Oboe, its pilot being guided towards the target by dot-dash signals in his headphones and the navigator receiving signals of his own which instructed the very moment when he must release his bright-burning, target-indicator flares. Thus, crews in the heavy bombers in their wake would be in no doubt as to the location of the target area and their own aiming point within it.

Such was the precision of Oboe, in which one ground station controlled the aircraft's track and another gave the release information, that if a crew was judged to be as much as 300 yards off target, it was back to school again! Time after time the Oboe crews would be "spot on" in positioning their target indicators. When groups of Oboe air crew and ground personnel meet these days, some wonder why it was judged more necessary to risk so many crews in heavy bombers on "area bombing" when Oboe was on hand to pinpoint strategic targets.

And, in so doing, maybe save bomber crew lives and even shorten the war? After all, Dr R.V. Jones, the air intelligence specialist, did call it "the most precise bombing system of the whole war".

In operational sorties alone, Bomber Command lost 47,268 members of air crew, the tiniest fraction of these being Oboe Mosquito pilots and navigators when compared with those who failed to return from missions in heavy bombers. If there had been more selective targeting and greater emphasis on using the two-man, far-cheaper-to-build Mosquito (the "Wooden Wonder" of the Second World War), with the Oboe "beam-bombing" equipment packed into its nose, who can envisage the effects and the results of the bombing offensive in Europe?

Oboe was sweet music in the ears to many crews in RAF Pathfinder Force, but as a precision device it fell short of achieving widespread use. This is seen by some as being a failure in strategic thinking among those who were charged with making the most of the Allies' superior air power. It was, in its day, the closest device possible to the guidance systems of present times, but let's face it – they, too, do not always hit the intended target.

Michael Cumming is the author of *'Beam Bombers'* (Sutton, £19.99)

No immunity for unacceptable conduct

A FOREIGN former head of state, whilst having immunity from the criminal jurisdiction of the United Kingdom in respect of acts performed in the exercise of functions recognised by international law as functions of a head of state, was not immune in respect of conduct which was plainly unacceptable in international law.

The House of Lords (Lord Slynn and Lord Lloyd dissenting) reversed the decision of the Divisional Court (Law Report, 30 October 1998), which had quashed provisional warrants issued under section 8(1)(b) of the Extradition Act 1989 at the request of the Spanish Government for the arrest of the applicant.

The charges against the applicant were torture, contrary to section 134(1) of the Criminal Justice Act 1988, and hostage-taking, contrary to section 1 of the Taking of Hostages Act 1982. It was conceded that both offences were extradition crimes within the meaning of the Extradition Act.

The Divisional Court quashed the warrant on the ground that the applicant was head of the Chilean state at the time of the alleged offences and that he was, therefore, entitled to immunity from the criminal processes of the English courts. The court certified, as a question of law of general public importance, "the proper interpretation and scope of the immunity enjoyed by a former head of state from arrest and extradition proceedings in the United Kingdom in respect of acts committed while he was head of state".

Alan Jones QC, Professor Christopher Greenwood, James

TUESDAY LAW REPORT
1 DECEMBER 1998

Regina v Bartle and others, ex parte Pinochet; Regina v Evans and others, ex parte Pinochet

House of Lords (Lord Slynn of Hadley, Lord Lloyd of Berwick, Lord Nicholls of Birkenhead, Lord Steyn and Lord Hoffmann) 25 November 1998

Lewis and Campaspe Lloyd-Jacob (Crown Prosecution Service, International Division) for the Government of Spain and the Metropolitan Police; Clive Nichols QC, Clare Montgomery QC, Helen Malcolm, James Cameron and Julian Knowles (Kingsley Napley) for the applicant; David Lloyd Jones (Treasury Solicitor) as amicus curiae; Professor Ian Brownlie QC, Michael Fordham, Owen Davies and Frances Webber (Birdmans) for Amnesty as interveners.

Lord Nicholls said that section 20 of the State Immunity Act 1978 conferred personal immunity upon a head of state by reference "with necessary modifications" to the privileges and immunities enjoyed by the head of a diplomatic mission under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations 1961, which was enacted as a schedule to the Diplomatic Privileges Act 1964.

Those immunities included, under article 31, "immunity from the criminal jurisdiction of the receiving state". Accordingly there could be no doubt that if the applicant had still been head of the Chilean state, he would have been entitled to immunity.

Whether he continued to enjoy immunity after ceasing to be head of state turned upon the proper interpretation of article 39.2 of the convention, which provided, in effect, that a former head of state should continue to enjoy immunity with respect to acts performed by him in the exercise of his functions as head of state.

The crucial question was whether the acts of torture and hostage-taking charged against the applicant were done in the exercise of his functions as head of state.

It hardly needed saying that torture of his own subjects, or aliens, would not be regarded by international law as a function of a head of state. Similarly, the taking of hostages, as much as torture, had been outlawed by the international community as an offence.

Whilst recognising that the functions of a head of state might include activities which were wrongful, even illegal, by the law of his own or other states, international law had made plain that certain types of conduct, including torture and hostage-taking, were not acceptable conduct on the part of anyone. That applied as much to heads of state, or even more so, as it did to everyone else. The contrary conclusion would make a mockery of international law.

KATE O'HANLON
Barrister

WORDS

CHRISTOPHER
HAWTREE
ambient, adj.

what does this mean? It once meant revolving, but now means surrounding, as in the ambient air. Is the grocery, then, spread about

the store? In which case it is neither a section nor small.

The OED notes that as an epithet of the air, "it is often ignorantly put for 'limpid', or otherwise misused", and one suspects that *The Grocer* mistook the 'bien' part of the word for the French. So perhaps it is the grocery that is ambient after all.

The waiter who won't get out of bed for less than £1,000

(and other ways to milk the Millennium)

BY HETTIE JUDAH

There may be more than 12 months to go before midnight on 31 December 1999 but if you haven't already been invited to the party to end all parties, let's face it, you won't be. There is, however, an alternative to staying in, watching television and inventing resolutions for the next millennium. You could go to work.

Rates for clocking in on New Year's Eve start at £1,000 per shift, instead of an excuse for morbid nostalgia, the evening could be a grand treat to a brighter future. Start the next century as you mean to go on: sober, with a happy bank balance.

For once the market is in the hands of the underdogs: waitresses and bar staff, child-minders and taxi drivers. These are the people without whom all celebrations will be impossible.

est triple-time pay rise, to about £24 an hour. Childminders, the world's largest babysitting agency, will be publishing its official rates in April, but estimates between £40 and £50 an hour for that evening. "We can only give rough estimates," says Aunt Jessica Cares, which provides qualified nannies. Current quotes hover around £500 a day, 10 times the usual rate. Come New Year there will be a vast shortage of reliable babysitters; some highly paid female executives are already toying with the idea of running one-off or one-day facilities for friends.

If the company of other people's children is just too hideous to contemplate, perhaps the prospect of ferrying drunken revellers around town is more attractive. Last week there were news stories suggesting that London will have no public

Minibus Hire and Coach Hire both expect their drivers to be asking £500 before the cost of the vehicle, although, as both admit, "It's a matter of finding somebody who will work then." Computer Cabs, which handles 2500 taxis in the capital, is tackling the problem systematically. After the trauma of this New Year they will begin polling their drivers. "When we can ascertain what sort of coverage we might expect we can start talking about cost; anyone working will definitely be paid a premium, but nobody really knows who they will have working; demand exceeds supply."

There are always glitzier options. The Celebrity Lookalikes agency has so far accepted no bookings, but anticipates a 20 per cent mark-up for the evening. Should you possess an uncanny resemblance to Marilyn Monroe, that translates as £1,000 for a guest appearance. All those hell-bent on hitting big-time fame in the next 12 months could do worse than try their hand at public speaking. After Dinner Speakers is quoting a 50 per cent rise in prices for 31 December 1999. Those whose ambitions carry them to an equal status with John Major can expect about £110,000 for a selection of well-crafted tidbits over the petits fours. More modest self-promoters, at the level of, say, Lily Savage, could be looking at a tidy £15,000. Not to be sniffed at.

News of the Millennium Bug has struck terror into the financial capitals of the world, and one of the greatest fears is that there won't be enough computer nerds to go round. If you never finished that IT course at college, now is the time to put the Sellotape back on to your spectacles, don your fighting anorak and try again: there is a fortune out there just waiting to be made. Repairs co is already quoting £200 an hour for anyone working as a Glob-

al programmer this summer, closer to the time it could go as high as £300. Sally Woodcock of The Final Step thinks this could be too conservative. "They should be able to command any price they want at that point. If people are panicking, currently call-out is £1,000 a day; the closer you get to the deadline the higher the rate will be."

If the closest you come to technological wizardry is twiddling with the knobs on your stereo, fear not. The prospect of a good knees-up would disappear without a fully paid up smoothie spinning the sounds. And fully paid they will surely be. At Discos will be paying

its DJs between £800 and £1,500 for a five-hour set, depending on the venue and location, compared with an average £200 for a gig at any other time. Absolutely Fab, which also books DJs, has already taken a number of calls and quotes "anything between £1,000 and £3,000". Meanwhile the bouncers are looking at £50 an hour as opposed to their usual rate of £4.

Famous DJs with a couple of hit singles, a decent reputation in Ibiza and egos the size of Wales can name their price to mastermind the gig of a lifetime. One promoter suggests that for a premier-league dance DJ the bidding would probably start at

£20,000. The cream of the crop, such as Paul Oakenfold, Goldie and Norman Cook (aka Fat Boy Slim) are represented by David Levy. "I do not discuss my clients' fees," he comments coyly. "But I can promise you it will be more than you could possibly imagine."

To go any higher, you need magic on your side; the prize for Extraordinary Offer of the Millennium So Far goes to Paul Zenon, an amiable young chap from Brighton with a talent for close-up trickery, seen last week on the streets of Soho. Zenon has been offered a millennium gig in Las Vegas. His fee? \$150,000.

It's got to go

Continued from page 1
be avoided. The figure is clearly emerging from a tomb - and you don't even have to think of a transit, just of any rising-from-grave horror film.

Or, if it's really not wormlike, it's meaningless tricksy texturing, which points in only one direction - not to Wilde, or to us, but to the hand of the maker. So the piece becomes, not a public monument, not a social act, but a personal tribute by the artist. Absolutely, in every way, it's not what was wanted.

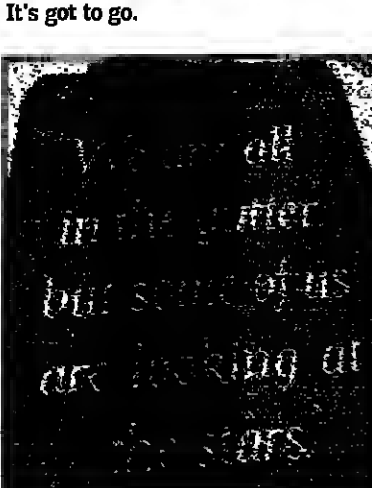
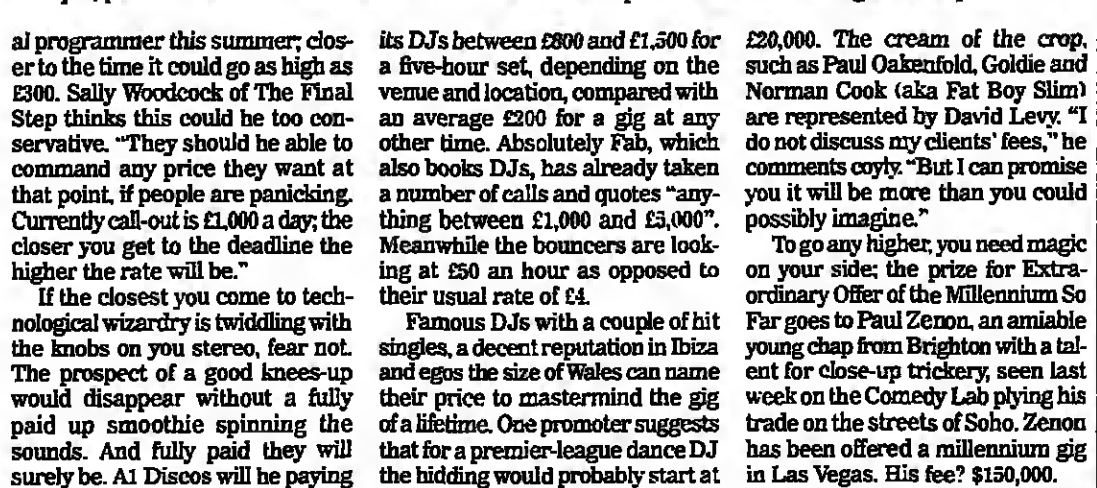
Now it would be quite wrong for me to suggest that anyone should think of breaking the law. Let me be clearer: do not break the law. Besides, it's a feature of recumbent statues that they do not easily tempt a volatile citizenry into an act of toppling. No doubt casual vandalism will be as resourceful as it ever is, but that won't be enough. And imagining the appropriate accident scenario takes one into the further reaches of extraordinary coincidence.

But why this fuss, anyway? London is just bursting with ludicrous and lamentable public sculpture. Do you happen to know *The Cellist* on the South Bank? Or *Physical Energy* in Kensington Gardens? And there are some absolute stunner out in Docklands. This piece is only one more, and by no means the worst or the largest example. Good heavens, look at that unspeakable Paozzoli - I know, a tautology - they put up in front of the new British Library. That really should be on the sappers' hit list.

OK. But I come back to the original point. It's a point about meaning. The Paozzoli giant means nothing, it's just something they stick outside a library because they think they have to stick something there. But the Wilde monument might have meant something great, might have performed a serious social and historical deed. The one we've got now doesn't. It doesn't begin to try. It's tourist tat. Don't say it insults Wilde. It disgraces us.

What a true Wilde monument would be like, who could make it, I can't immediately imagine. It wouldn't need to be bigger. It probably couldn't be directly figurative. Its impact would be complex. But we'll never get a true one while this one's still there. It took a big campaign to get it up, but that's nothing to what it'll take to get it down. An empty space would be better. At any event, it's got to go. It's got to go.

Cheque, please! Restaurant staff will be able to name their price on the busiest night of the year. TCL



CLASSIFIED

Legal Notices

No. 006557 of 1998
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
CHANCERY DIVISION
COMPANIES COURT
IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 1985
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Petition was on the 14th day of November 1998 presented to Her Majesty's High Court of Justice for the confirmation of the reduction of the capital of the above named Company from £1,700,000 to £300,000 by the cancellation of 1,400,000 Ordinary Shares of £1 each.

AND NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that the said Petition is directed to be heard before the Registrar of the Companies Court at the Royal Courts of Justice, Strand, London WC2A 2LL, on Wednesday the 9th December 1998, at 11.00 o'clock.

ANY Creditor or Shareholder of the said Company desiring to oppose the making of an Order for the confirmation of the said reduction of capital should appear at the time of hearing in person or by Counsel for that purpose.

A copy of the said Petition will be furnished in any such person requiring the same by the undersigned Solicitors on payment of the regulated charge for the same.

Dated this 1st day of December 1998
Messrs Maxwell Barker
27 Chancery Lane
London WC2A 1PA
(Solicitors for the above named Company) (Ref: 65)

No. 006556 of 1998
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
CHANCERY DIVISION
COMPANIES COURT
IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 1985
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Petition was on the 14th day of November 1998 presented to Her Majesty's High Court of Justice for the confirmation of the reduction of the capital of the above named Company from £457,000 to £372,000 by the cancellation of 400,000 Ordinary Shares of £1 each.

AND NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that the said Petition is directed to be heard before the Registrar of the Companies Court at the Royal Courts of Justice, Strand, London WC2A 2LL, on Wednesday the 9th December 1998, at 11.00 o'clock.

ANY Creditor or Shareholder of the said Company desiring to oppose the making of an Order for the confirmation of the said reduction of capital should appear at the time of hearing in person or by Counsel for that purpose.

A copy of the said Petition will be furnished in any such person requiring the same by the undersigned Solicitors on payment of the regulated charge for the same.

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Messrs Maxwell Barker
27 Chancery Lane
London WC2A 1PA
(Solicitors for the above named Company) (Ref: 65)

No. 006555 of 1998
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
CHANCERY DIVISION
COMPANIES COURT
IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 1985
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Petition was on the 14th day of November 1998 presented to Her Majesty's High Court of Justice for the confirmation of the reduction of the capital of the above named Company from £110,000 to £10,000 by the cancellation of 100,000 Ordinary Shares of £1 each.

AND NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that the said Petition is directed to be heard before the Registrar of the Companies Court at the Royal Courts of Justice, Strand, London WC2A 2LL, on Wednesday the 9th December 1998, at 11.00 o'clock.

ANY Creditor or Shareholder of the said Company desiring to oppose the making of an Order for the confirmation of the said reduction of capital should appear at the time of hearing in person or by Counsel for that purpose.

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THE JOYS OF MODERN LIFE

22. 'COUNTDOWN' BY TIM DOWLING

THE REWARDS of working from home are many, but the biggest must be the pleasure of not working from home.

Not working at work, as I remember it, involved an elaborate subterfuge of looking busy, or at least awake. Not working from home involves doing exactly what you want, as long as you stay out of the cleaner's way on Thursdays. Most of my days begin at 10am or 11am and progress directly to lunch. Sometimes I'm too "busy" to get dressed. And it is a hard day indeed that doesn't come to a crashing halt at 4:30pm, just in time for *Countdown*.

Like most people, I like *Countdown* for all the wrong reasons. I like the way it doesn't appear to be staged for anyone's benefit. I like the rapier-sharp exchanges between the host, Richard Whiteley, and the "keeper of the dictionary", one of a strict rota of bearded radio personalities.



Carol Vorderman and the host, Richard Whiteley

I like Richard Whiteley's jokes, most of which seem to come straight from a book of best man's speeches, and all of which are received in appreciative silence by the studio audience. Best of all I like the tortured, pun-laden route Richard takes when he shifts from introducing the dictionary guy to introducing Carol Vorderman. Some days you can't believe your ears. My personal favourite went something like this: "Speaking of plays, there once was a play called *I Am*

someone bad figured out a way to use them all to spell PERCOLATE. I got TOP No programme on television has *Countdown*'s special knack for making me feel smug and brain-damaged at the same time. I have often cosooled myself with the thought that I would do much better if I allowed myself to use a bit of paper and a pencil, which goes against my belief that television is meant to be

passive entertainment. I watch *Countdown* with a connoisseur's eye, in that I appreciate it, without really understanding what is going on. I look out for little strategies and psychological insights that might affect the course of play. You will notice, for instance, that Carol makes a little grimace of commiseration whenever the letter Q turns up, as if to say, "Oooh, bad luck mate." At this point I often shout at the television set that Q is just as good as any other letter, and that with a little imagination, and a U, a real player could turn this setback to his or her advantage. Of course, nothing could be further from the truth, and it only proves that I am largely missing the point. As for the numbers game, I find I do tolerably well at it for someone who has never fully understood its rules.

Chiefly I watch for the same reason that everyone else watches. I'm watching for the day when Carol flips over those letters and the first four are F, U, C and K. As far as I'm aware it hasn't happened yet, but if the hapless, showstopping corpsing that goes on whenever they accidentally spell something like BRA is anything to go by, that day will be apocalyptic.

Rachael says
Call
RACHAEL
studying
History
ROSE
studying
French
DAVE
studying
Management
LEON
studying
Maths
TASH
studying
Management
ALISTA
studying
Management
DAN
studying
Biology
IAN
studying
Geography
ROBBIE
studying
Economics

How we destroyed Sukarno

Foreign Office 'dirty tricks' helped
overthrow Indonesia's President

Sukarno in 1966. Over the next
30 years, half a million people died.

By Paul Lashmar and James Oliver

In autumn 1965, Norman Reddaway, a lean and craggy rising star of the Foreign Office, was briefed for a special mission. The British Ambassador to Indonesia, Sir Andrew Gilchrist, had just visited London for discussions with the head of the Foreign Office, Joe Garner. Covert operations to undermine Sukarno, the troublesome and independently minded President of Indonesia, were not going well. Garner was persuaded to send Reddaway, the FO's propaganda expert, to Indonesia. His task: to take on anti-Sukarno propaganda operations run by the Foreign Office and M16. Garner gave Reddaway £100,000 in cash "to do anything I could do to get rid of Sukarno", he says.

Reddaway thus joined the loose amalgam of groups from the Foreign Office, M16, the State Department and the CIA in the Far East, all striving to depose Sukarno in diffuse and devious ways. For the next six months he and his colleagues chipped away at Sukarno's regime, undermining his reputation and assisting his enemies in the army. By March 1966 Sukarno's power base was in tatters and he was forced to hand over his presidential authority to General Suharto, the head of the army, who was already running a campaign of mass murder against alleged communists.

According to Reddaway, the overthrow of Sukarno was one of the Foreign Office's "most successful" coups, which they have kept a secret until now. The British intervention in Indonesia, alongside complementary CIA operations, shows how far the Foreign Office was prepared to go in intervening in other countries' affairs during the Cold War. Indonesia was important both economically and strategically. In 1952 the US noted that if Indonesia fell out of Western influence, neighbours such as Malaya might follow, resulting in the loss of the "principal world source of natural rubber and tin and a producer of petroleum and other strategically important commodities".

The Japanese occupation during the Second World War, which to the Indonesians amounted to another period of colonial rule, had revitalised the nationalist movement which after the war, declared independence and assumed power. Aided Sukarno became Indonesia's first president. Western concern regarding Sukarno's regime grew owing to the strength of the Indo-

nesian communist party, the PKI, which at its peak had a membership of over 10 million, the largest communist party in the non-communist world. Concerns were not allayed by Sukarno's internal and external policies, including nationalising Western assets and a governmental role for the PKI.

By the early Sixties Sukarno had become a major thorn in the side of both the British and the Americans. They believed there was a real danger that Indonesia would fall to the communists. To balance the army's growing power, Sukarno aligned himself closer to the PKI.

The first indication of British interest in removing Sukarno appears in a CIA memorandum of 1962. Prime Minister Macmillan and President Kennedy agreed to "liquidate President Sukarno, depending on the situation and available opportunities".

Hostility to Sukarno was intensified by Indonesian objections to the Malaysian Federation. Sukarno complained the project was "a neo-colonial plot, pointing out that the Federation was a project for Malayan expansionism and continuing British influence in the region."

In 1963 his objections crystallised in his policy of Konfrontasi, a breaking off of all relations with Malaysia, soon coupled with low-level military intervention. A protracted border war began along the 700-mile-long front in Borneo.

According to Foreign Office sources the decision to get rid of Sukarno had been taken by Macmillan's Conservative government and carried through during Wilson's 1964 Labour government. The Foreign Office had worked in conjunction with their American counterparts on a plan to oust the turbulent Sukarno. A covert operation and psychological warfare strategy was instigated, based at Phoenix Park, in Singapore, the British headquarters in the region. The M16 team kept close links with key elements in the Indonesian army through the British Embassy. One of these was Ali Murtopo, later General Suharto's intelligence chief, and M16 officers constantly travelled back and forth between Singapore and Jakarta.

The Foreign Office's Information Research Department (IRD) also worked out of Phoenix Park, reinforcing the work of M16 and the military psychological warfare experts.

IRD had been established by the Labour government in 1948 to con-



President Sukarno (above) inspecting his troops in October 1965. Norman Reddaway (below), propaganda expert of the Foreign Office

Hulton Getty

duct an anti-communist propaganda war against the Soviets, but had swiftly become enlisted in various anti-independence movement operations in the declining British Empire. By the Sixties, IRD had a staff of around 400 in London and information officers around the world influencing media coverage in areas of British interest.

According to Roland Chailis, the BBC correspondent at the time in Singapore, journalists were open to manipulation by IRD, owing, ironically, to Sukarno's own policies. "In a curious way, by keeping correspondents out of the country Sukarno made them the victims of official channels, because almost the only information you could get was from the British ambassador in Jakarta." The opportunity to isolate Sukarno and the PKI came in October 1965 when an alleged PKI coup attempt was the pretext for the army to sideline Sukarno and eradicate the PKI. Who exactly instigated

the coup and for what purposes remains a matter of speculation. However, within days the coup had been crushed and the army was firmly in control. Suharto accused the PKI of being behind the coup, and set about suppressing them.

Following the attempted coup Britain set about exploiting the situation. On 5 October, Alec Adams, political adviser to the Commander-in-Chief, Far East, advised the Foreign Office: "We should have no hesitation in doing what we can surreptitiously to blacken the PKI in the eyes of the army and the people of Indonesia." The Foreign Office agreed and suggested "suitable propaganda themes" such as PKI atrocities and Chinese intervention.

One of the main themes pursued by IRD was the threat posed by the PKI and "Chinese communists". Newspaper reports continually emphasised the danger of the PKI. Drawing upon their experience in Malaya in the Fifties, the British



emphasised the Chinese nature of the communist threat. Roland Chailis said: "One of the more successful things which the West wished on to the non-communist politicians in Indonesia was to transfer the whole idea of communism onto the Chinese minority in Indonesia. It turned it into an ethnic thing. It is a terrible

thing to have done to incite the Indonesians to rise and slaughter the Chinese."

But it was the involvement of Sukarno with the "PKI in the bloody months following the coup that was to be the British trump card. According to Reddaway: "The communist leader, Aidit, went on the run and Sukarno, being a great politician, went to the front of the palace and said that the communist leader Aidit must be hunted down and brought to justice. From the side door of the palace, he was dealing with him every day by courier."

This information was revealed by the signal intelligence of Britain's GCHQ. The Indonesians didn't have a clue about radio silence and this double-dealing was picked up by GCHQ; the British had its main eavesdropping base in Hong Kong turned into events in Indonesia.

The discrediting of Sukarno was of fundamental importance. Sukarno remained a respected and popular

leader against whom Suharto could not move openly until the conditions were right. The constant barrage of had international coverage and Sukarno's plummeting political position fatally undermined him. On 10 March 1966, Sukarno was forced to sign over his powers to General Suharto. Now perceived as closely associated with the attempted coup and the PKI, Sukarno had been discredited to the point where the army felt able to act. The PKI was eliminated as a significant force and a pro-Western military dictatorship firmly established.

It was not long before Suharto quietly ended the inactive policy of Konfrontasi resulting in a swift improvement in Anglo-Indonesian relations, which continue to be close to this day.

From: 'Britain's Secret Propaganda War 1948-77', by Paul Lashmar and James Oliver. To be published by Sutton on 7 December

Rachael says she's living in a slum. Unfortunately no one else has noticed. By Cayte Williams

Calling time on the landlord

RACHAEL
studying
Art History

ROSIE
studying
French

DAVID
studying
Management

LEONA
studying
Maths

TASH
studying
Management

ALISTAIR
studying
Management

DANI
studying
Biology

IAN
studying
Geography

ROBBIE
studying
Economics

THERE ARE three things that plague students through college: essays, money and landlords. On the subject of accommodation, the students fall into two camps: Students Who Will Fight The Landlord and those who just pay the rent and accept the damp and crumbling corridors. In the Manchester household, Rachael falls into the first category. And it looks like she's on her own. It's not that the other eight have abandoned her in the quest for decent housing. It's just that it's not a priority.

The students signed the lease, thereby agreeing to spend the bulk of their grants on rent. The landlord agreed to make many improvements, most of which never got done. After essentials - an alarm system and ground-floor window bars - were installed, the other eight members of the house resigned themselves to the damp squalor but Rachael could smell a rat. Not that the house has rodents, but her rip-off detector was going full tilt.

"The things that are wrong with the house affect your health," she explains. "Like the damp and the rotting windows. The carpet was so wet in David's room that mushrooms were growing there, and there were leaks and drips everywhere." Rachael pointed all this out to the landlord. "There was this huge damp patch on the wall which he said was darker

THIS STUDENT LIFE



WEEK 6 AT THE
MANCHESTER
STUDENT HOUSE

because it was new plaster," she says. "Basically, he was talking rubbish."

Rachael is not one to take these things lightly. This is the girl who went on a New Zealand holiday when she was 18 and ended up DJing on a local radio station; and for whom hungee-jumping is a nice way to pass the time. She's not scared of a little landlord argy-bargy.

"I got fed up with living in a skiddy house like this," she explains. "The landlord is getting £15,000 a year out of us and he's done nothing

in return. So I called the council, and an environmental health officer came to the house. He went through what repairs needed to be done for us to live in a decent house."

Everyone was rather surprised by the environmental health officer's far-reaching findings. Among 15 or so problems, he said that the kitchen on the top floor should be ripped out because it was a fire hazard. "It should have had free access," explains Rachael. "Otherwise it was a danger."

However, Rosie is narked off with the changes. She's got a kitchen next to her room which she was happily using for storage space. "Rachael and Dani may have to use my kitchen now they don't have one and my storage is back all over my room again. Everything's all over the place."

Rachael is undeterred. "The environmental officer is a professional and if he says there is something wrong, then there is something wrong."

Since the landlord found out about the council man, she has been harassed by his sidekick who yells abuse whenever he comes around to do the enforced repairs. "I won't let somebody bully us," she says defiantly, but the others are feeling the strain.

"I quite liked the landlord," says Tash. "But be and Rachael have been at each other's throats."

The crisis is starting to escalate. "There's been an exchange of nasty letters," Tash continues. "In the past, if you hadn't paid your rent on the first of the month, the landlord would have been fine about it, but now we've got this nasty letter saying pay on the first or else. And he gave us a letter which said he was going to come around and do monthly checks on the house."

"When you see the list of things wrong with the house that the council sent us, it really opens your eyes, because I wouldn't have bothered to do anything about it. This is a student house, it's not your house at home. You try and make it as homely as you can, but there's no point being concerned about the structure of it because we won't be here in 12 months." The girl has got a point, but as Rachael would say, "It's the principle of the thing."

Mention the house situation to the others, and they shrug their shoulders. Nobody is blaming Rachael for getting the council involved, but you can sense a tension in the air that wasn't there before. Will the landlord make everyone's life a misery because Rachael wanted to make a point? Or is Rachael doing the right thing and making the landlord work for his money? Who knows - but only time will tell whether they've got a Rugsby collecting their rent or not.

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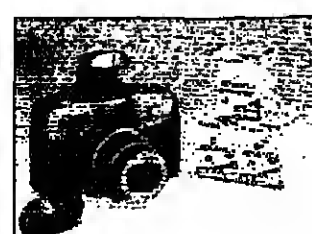
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To play the queen

Antony Sher – actor, writer, painter. All round renaissance man, in fact. And now he is interested in the stuff of souls. In particular, the soul of Shakespeare's great Egyptian lover. Antony is Cleopatra. By David Lister

Antony Sher was on his way to the psychiatrist when I met him. He was to tell me later that the Shakespearean role still most wants to play on stage is Cleopatra. But it was not to discuss this that he was seeing a shrink. The day before he had been to see the neurologist.

At 49, Sher should be a contented man. His new novel *The Feast* seems sure to confirm his status as a writer. A surreal political thriller set in east Africa, it is by turns chilling and moving and shows a fevered imagination at work.

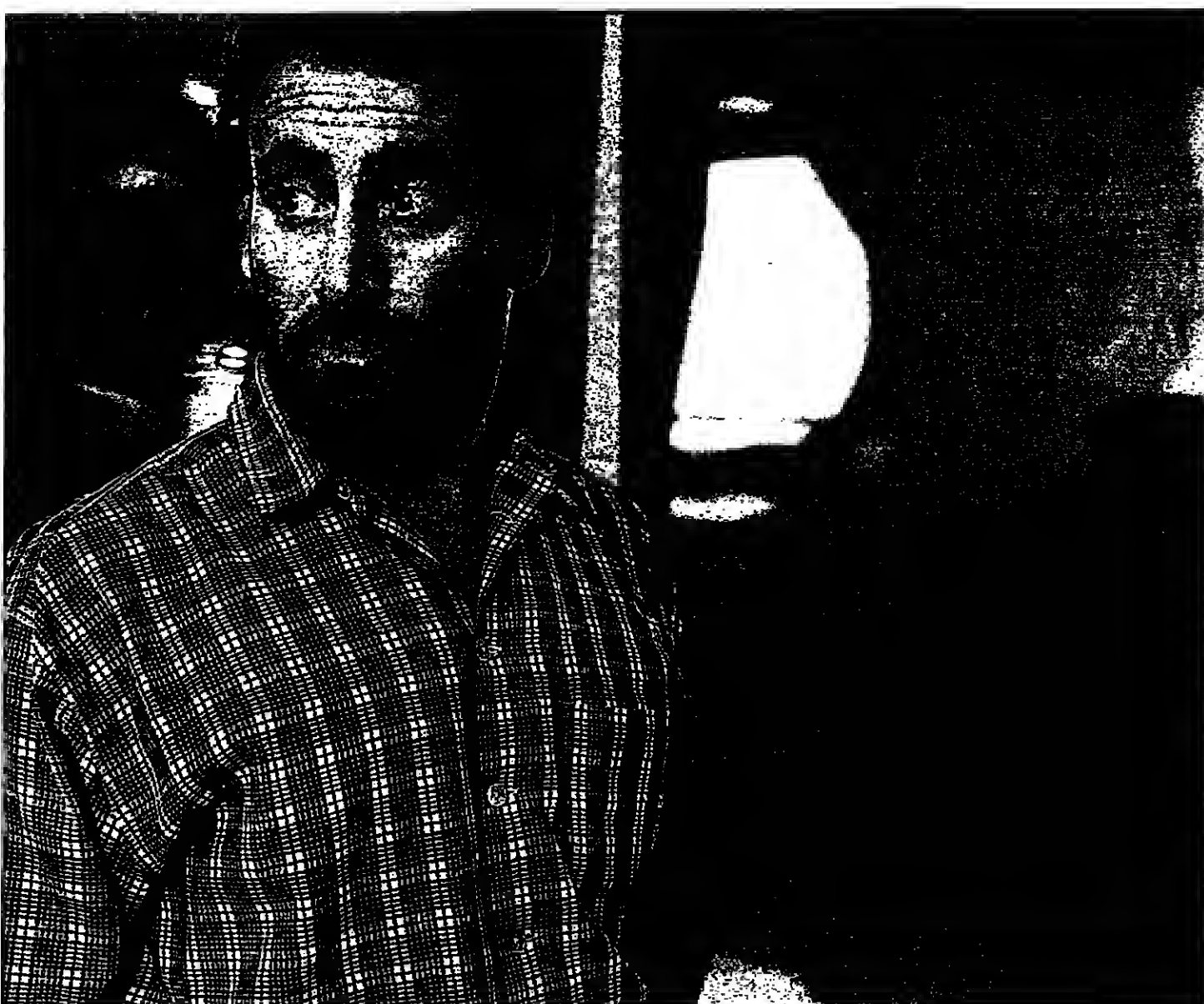
And the day job is about to take a new turn. It is curious that Sher's name always springs to mind as one of our great Shakespearean actors. But he has actually only played five Shakespearean roles and not one of the great tragic heroes. His sixth will be Leontes in the RSC's new production of *The Winter's Tale*. And it is so that he can learn more about the King of Sicilia's irrational jealousy in this late "problem" play that he is consulting psychiatrists and neurologists.

The production, which starts in Stratford and then transfers to the Barbican, is directed by Sher's partner and RSC associate director Greg Doran. Sher talks in matter of fact terms about a normal, loving relationship complete with its rock-solid dependency and its tantrums.

"The worst aspect of being directed by Greg," he says, "is that we lose our best friend. We lose the person that you come home to and say I had a shitty day at rehearsal, or the director's driving me crazy. So home life is quite strange. We're not allowed to talk about it unless one of us asks permission. The first time we worked together was on *Titus Andronicus* and there were literally flying plates."

It is hard to imagine Sher throwing anything. Shy at first, thoughtful and serious, he is more interested in engaging in genuine conversation than in answering a set of questions. And as he begins to relax, he reveals a refreshingly irreverent political incorrectness. It's intriguing to meet him at a moment when he appears to be reassessing his life, his self-esteem and even his whole acting style.

"I spent a lot of years trying not to be who I am," he says, "be it sexually, or Jewish, or white south African because I don't want to cor-



Antony Sher: "The kind of acting that excites me and moves me is mostly from females."

ner the market in minority groups in that way. Now I've not just come to terms with it, I've learned to love those aspects of who I am. And it's stupid to pretend that Africa isn't very powerful in my blood."

Some of his guilt feelings in the past arose because he never left South Africa out of distaste for apartheid. It was a career move, to go to drama school in England. "No, there was nothing heroic. I wasn't remotely aware of apartheid until I left. People find that hard to believe. But life was so good and comfortable. And my family was so apolitical. We never thought anything other than what the state told us."

In his new novel Sher is vividly in love with Africa again, entranced even by its violence, decadence and comedy. Its protagonist is Felix, who runs a large, run-down theatre somewhere in East Africa. Returning home from America after a spell in rehab, the world seems to have gone mad; he is now sober but the rest of the world is drunk.

But there is tenderness too, particularly in the relationship between Felix and his goddaughter. As Sher claims unfashionably that all fiction is to some degree autobiographical, I wondered if this too was based on a relationship in his own life. "No, I don't have a godchild. I'm

not actually that comfortable with kids at all. I'd be a terrible father because I'm so selfish, so self-absorbed. I'm so busy that there's just space in my life for a big, solid relationship, which I have."

So he doesn't miss children? "No, I sometimes think there's this strange thing that a lot of other people seem to do. I wonder what that must be like. I feel curious about it, but no sort of gut feeling." He considers this for a moment, then asks: "Have you got children? They must be terribly time consuming?"

Sher's late father was a businessman who exported hides. He saw little of his son, an experience

Sher would not want to see repeated, even were he able to choose to do so. "To write and to paint I'd have to lock myself away and then I'd be an awful father. And my father was very remote father who was passionate about his work, and in that period in South Africa had virtually nothing to do with us kids. My mother didn't really either because there were maids and servants to look after the children."

"But I loved writing that relationship in the book because I really enjoyed imagining that, and that relationship, an island of tenderness is very important to the story because the story is so black and vi-

olent. No, not black... dark. I must be careful. Political correctness."

Sher is equally cynical about political correctness in the theatre. Bravely, for a white South African, he agrees that it is time to end the bar on white actors playing Othello. "Iago's more my part but I think it's a terrible shame that all the great actors aren't given their Othello. It's tragic, and it's ludicrous really. Why should I, who's not heterosexual, be allowed to play Leontes? Why should we be allowed to claim the souls of different people, yet when it comes to skin colour... it's absurd."

This phrase about claiming the soul is one Sher chooses carefully. And it is not a phrase he would probably associate with his most famous and highly technical performances, such as his high-energy Richard the Third on crutches, in which the emphasis is less on seeking the soul of a part than in techniques of disguise and impersonation.

His change in approach is, he says, "a conversion that I've had. When I started out as an actor my heroes were Olivier and Peter Sellers and Alec Guinness, the great disguise merchants. And I'm not interested in that at all any more. The kind of acting that excites me and moves me is mostly from females: Judi Dench, Fiona Shaw, Vanessa Redgrave, Michael Gambon at his best does that well."

The search for the soul of Leontes has led him from the rehearsal room to the consulting room. "It's really interesting to try and track down what condition he might have. Here is a man clearly imagining [his wife having an affair] and bringing terrible destruction to him and his family as a result. He stops being able to sleep, he hallucinates, his speech is extraordinarily fractured and it's just the most wonderful case history to build up."

Seeking the soul of a character has also led to a request that is the strangest that RSC artistic director Adrian Noble has ever received. Sher explains: "I've asked Adrian if I could play Cleopatra. It would have been played originally by a chap. Adrian said that if he allowed me to do that he would be lynched by about a dozen leading actresses. But it's a wonderful part. Antony bores me rigid."

The Feast is published by Little, Brown, price £16.99. *The Winter's Tale* opens in Stratford-upon-Avon on 10 December (01783 295623).

Space not the place

POP

SPACE
BRIXTON ACADEMY
LONDON

ONE OF the drawbacks of being in a cartoon band is that, for the band members, the joke begins to wear thin. It is Space's lyrical surrealism and permanently raised eyebrows that caused them to stand out against their gloomy contemporaries two years ago, but the skewed humour that they so effortlessly relay in the studio was severely lacking at Brixton Academy on Friday night.

Compounded by the venue's notorious PA system, Tommy Scott's vocals came over as a muffled whine, while the soft-rock histrionics of guitarist and vocalist Jamie Murphy would have fitted a Dire Straits gig.

Space date from 1984, though fame and fortune eluded them until 1996 when their eerie "Female of the Species" suddenly shifted a million copies. If Space's knowingness has been part of their act all that time, their listlessness is hardly surprising.

One of the tragically few high points of the evening came with the arrival of Catatonia's Cerys Matthews, albeit on a video backdrop, for their celebrated joint-rendering of "The Ballad of Tom Jones". Unlike Scott, her pleasingly chafing voice wasn't drowned out by Murphy's pompous fretwork while the starting line "I want to cut off your nuts" provided ribald amusement among the swathes of lager-swilling lads in the crowd.

But the lounge-lizard crooning, the sunny splashes of reggae and the rousing string arrangements of Space's album *Tin Planet* were sorely missed and Scott seemed strangely subdued. One would expect such a relentlessly wacky band to be bursting with Jarvis-like inter-song witticisms. But the only time that Scott spoke up was to shout, "Prince Charles is a tit, don't you think?", but he failed to elucidate any further.

You longed for the vaudeville of their recorded material, but though Scott climbed the balustrades during "Neighbourhood", and clambered over the DJ box during "We've Got To Get Out Of This Place", they lacked passion and precision.

Considering their catastrophic world tour in 1997, during which Murphy had a breakdown and drummer Andy Perle suffered from nervous exhaustion, it is a wonder that Space are playing at all. They managed to produce a classy album, but as a live act, it seems that Space are burnt out. FIONA STURGES

Treachery, confusion and extortionate tunes

THE STARTING time originally announced for last Saturday's performance of Rossini's *Semiramide* was 7.15pm, late for an opera that doesn't give much change out of four hours, and Chelsea Opera Group wisely decided to start 45 minutes earlier (the opera still didn't finish till nearly 11.00pm).

Unfortunately, news of the change failed to reach this quarter, and your correspondent missed most of the opera's first hour. It's a measure of Rossini's leisurely approach to narrative development that Act 1, Scene 1 was still in the process of unfolding at that point.

That's not a criticism. Far from it: the whole point is to give the singers room for extravagant display that being the dramatic mode. It's all very well to complain that Rossini's bel canto allows no character development, but that's not what the composer was after. As Rossini stacks up the 15-minute spans of music, the notes tumble forth in gorgeous profusion, and every one of the characters (the term seems too emphatic) move from emotion to emotion, each aria embodying a different state, each ensemble a conflict.

But "development"? Hardly.

OPERA
SEMIRAMIDE
QUEEN ELIZABETH HALL
LONDON

Once you manage to get a grip on the usual array of treacheries, supernatural apparitions and mistaken identities, you could summarise the plot of *Semiramide* in a couple of sentences.

Premiered in 1823, *Semiramide* was the last opera that Rossini composed for Italy, and he went out with a bang: the opera is a summation of everything he had

achieved to that point, and makes the most extortionate demands on its singers. None of the soloists here emerged unscathed, but all of them attacked the music with an acute grasp of the peculiar dram that bel canto generates, while Grant Llewellyn, conducting like a man possessed, had a proper sense of the gradual accumulation of tension through those long, almost sexual spasms of melody. He bent orchestra and chorus to his will while paying minute attention to his soloists' vocal decorations. While there were rough spots, they mattered much less than the overall impact.

We were lucky to have Nelly Miricioiu as Semiramide. She has tremendous presence: even her walk to the centre of the platform carried dramatic weight, and concert performance is no obstruction to her imperious theatricality. Some of the colour drains from the lower reaches of her chest voice, but she cuts through the *coloratura* like a knife, embellishing the line with tremendous flair.

She was all but matched by Patricia Bardon who, in the trouser role of Semiramide's long-lost son, sang with poise, the mezzo voice weighted perfectly against Miricioiu's soprano: their duets were the evenings' highlight.

The opera's one out and out villain is the schemer Assur, and if George Emil Crasnar's bass lacked a clean outline, he nevertheless radiated sulphurous malevolence, nowhere more so than in his hallucinatory mad scene.

Given that nobody seems likely to stage Rossini at his grandest, the capacity audience was clearly grateful for what proved to be one of Chelsea Opera Group's most successful evenings. Long may they flourish. NICK KIMBERLEY

That's no way to treat a diva

POP

BJÖRK
LONDON PALLADIUM

TO THE left, the six women and two men of the Icelandic String Octet sat down in front of music stands on a raised, L-shaped dais before a ragged backcloth. To the right stood the solitary Mark Bell, ready to operate pre-programmed backing tracks from a neat flight-cased rack of matt black electronic modules. Then came Björk, dark-haired and in an expensive white party dress whose sleeves made Christ-mas snow-angel shapes as she raised her arms.

Björk is one of those artists who can do no wrong, invariably drawing anything from approving nods to wild adulation. She's a dance act, an indie trooper, an avant-garde Shirley Bassey, a fashion icon, a pop idol, and the quintessential video star for the Nineties. Whether she is swooning in expensive special effects, or flattened in unflattering monochrome, her girning features and jerky movements – at whatever point you press the play button – are screaming: "watch me, me, me!"

But where many ideogenic front-people fail on stage, Björk has the trump card: she is a genuine, creative musi-

cian. And without any sense of compromise, she appears to view live performance both as an adventure and a chance to satisfy the fans with the familiar hits. On stage, the wonderful wayward instrument of her voice becomes more like a story-telling improvisation that can meld the histrionics of "Isobel" and the commentary of "Human Behaviour" into a bigger totality. She pointed out (in an interview with Louise Gray in *The Wire*) that only now – after three solo albums – does she have a sufficient quantity of "good enough" songs to draw from for a major live gig.

The latest version of the Björk roadshow relies entirely on the singer's performance skills to communicate. The lack of musical interplay between the twin "playback" poles of strings and machines meant that endings were often unsatisfactory, for example, but there were plenty of impressive moments: the

skeletal drum pattern for "Possibly Maybe", skipping go-go-ish beats and clever digital distortion woven into the overall collage of Björk's set. The string arrangements provided musical drama and some surprising reinterpretations of the older hits – when you could hear them. You would think the Palladium's scale and kitschy charm ideal for the intimate electro-chamber pop that is Björk's forte. Unfortunately, the audience was punished by a cloth-eared sound mix better suited to a stadium rock gig or hangar-sized club, with low-end frequencies that would have been better spent demolishing chimneys.

As well as losing arrangement details and string timbres, the live sound managed to obscure too much of the main attraction – Björk herself. We heard the full range of hits, from "Hunter" to "Violently Happy", and we thrilled to the light show, but we didn't really get to hear enough of the music which that unique voice possesses. A version of this review appeared in some editions of yesterday's paper.

JOHN L. WALTERS



Björk: impressive moments

Angela Lubrano

Jonathan Miller's immaculate production... This is a *Traviata* to die for! Observer

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He who lives by the score



Elmer Bernstein has written some of the most famous film scores in history, not least those for *The Great Escape* and *The Magnificent Seven*. But what exactly is it that makes soundtrack music great? If anyone knows, Elmer will know. By Geoffrey Macnab

No, Elmer Bernstein confides, he does not burn the soundtracks to his own movies. The 76-year-old composer is responsible for some of the most catchy melodies in film history. His themes for *The Magnificent Seven* and *The Great Escape* are whistled the world over. He has scored over 200 films, from *To Kill A Mockingbird* to *Cape Fear*, but it is not necessarily his own work which gnaws away at him in his private moments. "My *bête noire* is an album by my daughter, who is a songwriter. I just can't get it out of my head."

Bernstein was in Belgium recently to give a concert at the Flanders Film Festival, "a mélange of music from *The Age Of Innocence* and *The Magnificent Seven*," he explains. His most recent movie, *Twilight*, starring Paul Newman and Susan Sarandon, is released this week. Last month, he also recorded an album of film songs with Neil Diamond. Several new features are also pencilled in on the horizon.

New York-born, he is nicknamed Bernstein West – as in West Coast and Hollywood – to distinguish him from his namesake, Leonard Bernstein, who was known as Bernstein East. A former student with Aaron Copland, he was grey-listed in the McCarthy era, which meant that in the early Fifties he was scoring B-movies such as *Robot Monster* and *Cat Women Of The Moon*. His music for Otto Preminger's *The Man With The Golden Arm* (1956) marked him out as the most distinctive film composer of his generation. Since then, he has been Oscar-nominated 13 times.

He won't be drawn on what constitutes the perfect movie score but his views on certain key scores reveals much about what makes a soundtrack.

The Magnificent Seven (1960)

Dir: John Sturges
Composer: Elmer Bernstein
"Now we get to the question – should the audience notice the music? I really liked the film when I saw it without music. But it was on the slow side. That's alright in a highly personal story, but in an adventure, shoot-'em-up cowboy film, pace is very important. The function of the music was therefore to get on top of the film and to drive it along. Of course, in that kind of case, you do notice the music – and you're meant to. I'm often asked what I consider to be the most important attribute of the film composer. Assuming that the person can write music, which is not in fact always the case these days, what is most important is that he or she is a dramatist."



Main picture: the 'The Great Escape' for which Bernstein composed the classic soundtrack; below: 'The Magnificent Seven'

The Devil and Daniel Webster (1941)

Dir: William Dieterle
Composer: Bernard Herrmann
"This isn't one of Herrmann's best-known titles but it had a great effect on my decision to become a film music composer. It was one of the earliest scores in the history of film music that had a peculiarly American voice. Herrmann fell back on a lot of folk music. If you think about who was writing film music in the United States in the Forties, the names that spring to mind are Miklos Rozsa, Franz Waxman, Max Steiner, Dimitri Tiomkin – these are all people who came from middle Europe, with a middle-European, symphonic sensibility. Along comes Bernard with a plaintive, less orchestrated American folk song idiom – an American sensibility that was very different."

The Heiress (1949)

Dir: William Wyler
Composer: Aaron Copland
"This was Wyler's adaptation of the Henry



James novel, *Washington Square*. Aaron's was obviously very much an American voice. Unfortunately, his score, which was brilliant, was operated on a bit surgically, and not to the advantage of the music. When I did *The Age Of Innocence* for Scorsese, I went the

other way – I went back to middle Europe. That score is unashamedly related to Brahms. These jumped-up, up-market people in the States, well, what would they have been listening to in 1870? They'd have been listening to European music."

Sunset Boulevard (1950)

Dir: Billy Wilder
Composer: Franz Waxman; and *Spellbound* (1945)
Dir: Alfred Hitchcock
Composer: Miklos Rozsa
"There's a tremendous sense of excitement about the *Sunset Boulevard* score. That was Waxman's thing. It's the kind of music that keeps you on the edge of the seat. He did the same in *Rebecca*. A Waxman score is very different from, say, a Miklos Rozsa score. Rozsa is comfortable and satisfying, but sometimes inventive when you least expect it. The risk he took in *Spellbound*, using the theremin (one of the earliest electronic instruments) was brave at that time. He takes your attention. You say, 'whoa!'"

The Man With The Golden Arm (1956)

Dir: Otto Preminger
Composer: Elmer Bernstein
"The *Man With The Golden Arm* was the first film to use jazz as the main thrust of the entire score. Originally, I wanted to do the score as a concerto to camera for a small jazz group and a large symphony orchestra. As time went on, I decided a small jazz group wouldn't give me the power I needed. I went to speak to Preminger about it. He was a scary character. I thought that he was simply going to throw me out of the office when I told him that what I had in mind was to do the entire score as a jazz-based score. But what he said was something very uncharacteristic for him. He told me that that was what I had been hired for, and that that is what I should go away and do."

Titanic (1997)

Dir: James Cameron
Composer: James Horner
"There are a lot of my colleagues who, for some reason or another, are James Horner bashers. I'm not among them. He's a good composer and I think he has done some extraordinary things. I think that his score for *Field Of Dreams* is probably the best electronic score that has ever been written. But I didn't like *Titanic*. James's score wasn't really allowed to work in the film. Half of the time, you couldn't really hear it properly. It was drowned out. Luckily for him, the song survived, but that whole film feels very wrong-footed to me."

Kundun (1997)

Dir: Martin Scorsese
Composer: Philip Glass
"I was very taken with this score. It's interesting that I should be because I have a relationship with Scorsese and it was a film I had wanted to do myself. The basic effect of this kind of minimalism is mesmerizing, and anything mesmerizing begins to feel spiritual."

Twilight (1997)

Dir: Robert Benton
Composer: Elmer Bernstein
"The best film music can do something which is maybe implicit in the film but not totally explicit. *Twilight* was an example of where the music is amplifying something implicit in the film. There is obviously a sexual attraction between the two main characters, Susan Sarandon and Paul Newman. In the score, I try to imbue the entire sense of the film with a kind of sexuality. It's not in your face all the time. It takes the form of the chord structure I use, which is slithery, rather than straightforward. All the sounds tend to be below Middle C in that throaty, sexy area. To me, one of the sexiest sounds in the world is the low end of a flute."

THE INDEPENDENT COLLECTOR

JOHN WINDSOR'S GUIDE TO COLLECTING CONTEMPORARY ART: MICHELE DAVID



AN ARTIST who pours paint on to a laid-flat canvas, you might assume, is a creator of abstracts, much in the manner of Jackson Pollock.

Michele David is an adept paint pourer. But a second glance at her seemingly abstract, colourful swirls and elaborate textures reveals that they are all faithfully drawn from nature.

Everybody has had the experience of gazing at a leaf, a tree, a rock or a cloud, and discovering that its name dissolves into abstract form. Japanese rock gardens use this phenomenon, inviting contemplatives to experience fluctuations between abstraction and hard reality. David's

paintings have a comparable charm.

The 30-year-old Scottish artist, who lives in Shetland and whose current exhibition is at the Royal Scottish Academy in Edinburgh, has roamed the wildernesses of Australia and America, photographing the display of natural forms that takes place out of sight of man – the splashing and bubbling, growth, decay and oozing of sap.

Back in her studio, within sight of the sea, she lays the canvas flat and imitates nature – thin washes of green and blue oil paint splash and bleed into one another, creating the depths and shallows of the ocean, or the efflorescence of algae. Small

quantities of real sand or plaster coalesce on the canvas, their grains forming shoals and shores stretching into the distance.

Her close-ups of decaying seaweed or tree trunks, divested of scale, can appear momentarily as monumental, abstract forms, before darting back to their true identity. But, she says, "they are all completely figurative".

She says of her painting of a bloodwood tree trickling red sap in the Australian bush: "The trunk is so close up that at first you've no idea what it is. But the realism has not diminished – it has simply been abstracted from its context".

She used glue, overpainted, for the sap. "People came in and said 'What's that?' because it looked abstract. I felt I was painting something weird – and yet it was true to nature. I loved it."

Not all her paintings play such tricks. Her trees look like trees, however long you look at them.

She spent five years painting Shetland's rock pools. *Queensland Coast*, painted this year and shown left, is an estuary viewed from the air that, to some, could be a rock pool. The prickly vegetation on the land, made from stippled, overpainted plaster, could be either big trees or tiny plants. The bright green-blue

submerged sandbank on the left is real sand.

She painted the dark blue depths first, then the tide came in – a liquid blue-green wash overpainted with eddies from a dryish brush after the canvas had dried and been stood upright on an easel. "There is a fine line," she says, "between preserving the initial spontaneity of a painting and working into it."

In her current show of paintings of America, "Yellowstone: Fireholes and Acid Springs", geysers spout, and mud pots bubble with lethal, brightly-coloured sulphur. Ribbons of bacteria surge – white, yellow, orange, according to the temperature around the

boiling springs. "I haven't overdone the colours", she says: "that's what they are."

David, who graduated from Glasgow School of Art, won the Villiers David prize for travel abroad in 1996. She has held several residencies at schools of art. Her paintings, on show to 16 Dec at the Royal Scottish Academy (0131-225 6671), were produced as a result of winning this year's Alastair Solvesen Trust Art Scholarship: exhibition prices – from £850 for 20in by 30in paintings to £2,400 for 5ft by 5ft 6ins. Colour photographs, 18in by 12in, £60. She is represented by the Berkeley Square Gallery (0171-493 7939).

MANTEGNA TO RUBENS

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THOUGH HAYDN is often praised for his musical humour, it's not generally known that he also set cryptic crossword clues to music. Take, for example, the soprano aria "On mighty pens uplifting soars the eagle", from his oratorio *The Creation*, premiered two centuries ago this year. Pens is a three-letter synonym for wings. To get the connection, try pens, or quills, from old English pinne, from Latin penna, meaning feathers.

The text for *The Creation* is knotted with this kind of infelicity, which perhaps explains why Anne Hunter, wife of Haydn's friend, the famous English surgeon John Hunter, made her own version of these famous words. Whether the composer ever saw it, or approved, remains unclear. However, it came to light some years ago, and was first performed in 1993 by a choir and orchestra consisting largely

CLASSICAL

THE CREATION
STATIONERS' HALL
LONDON

of medics. Hunter's arrangement is not without its 18th-century periphrasis: "the scaly fry that lave in his green wave" is quite a mouthful. In general, though, there is nothing it lacks in clarity that is any less opaque in the standard libretto.

The Stationers' Hall proved an excellent venue for a revival of her version, given as part of the St Cecilia International Festival of Music, directed by Penelope Rapson. This was billed as the first performance on period instruments, and it was given by Fiori Musicali, who just managed to squeeze their choir and orchestra into one end of the hall. Though the forces used were small, with

only three soloists, and brass and timpani high up in the gallery, there was plenty of historical precedent for doing it this way. Some of the playing in the famous opening depiction of chaos sounded authentic in other ways, though tuning and ensemble improved as the evening progressed, and the joy of Haydn's tone-painting was especially marked in the clarity of the hall's acoustics.

The details of its standard text excepted, *The Creation* is a work of wonderfully artful simplicity. The score contains music that is mature Haydn at his finest, and the structure, though a straightforward telling of the myth, ends with a sense of profound satisfaction, not least because we bear its radiant close against the knowledge that things in the garden did not turn out well, despite the praise and glory.

Penelope Rapson gave an unforced reading of the work,

letting it unfold naturally at its own pace, while retaining control of details of the performance. The accompanied recitatives were finely honed orchestrally. God's creation of the agile tiger, the bounding stag and the slothful worm were especially well evoked. For the choruses, Rapson chose speeds that conformed to their Handelian cut, measured to fit the resonant interior of the building. Soprano Patrizia Kwella was a clear-toned Gabriel and Eve, and Simon Birchall, bass, an authoritative Raphael and Adam. Tenor Willis Morgan took the part of Uriel cheerfully and confidently. Together, they made a flexible trio in the closing chorus of Part 1 and the penultimate number of Part 2; and Kwella and Birchall, for their Part 3 number "With every good, most bounteous Lord", and enchanting duet.

NICHOLAS WILLIAMS

mirror image

Jonathan Miller on Reflection



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HEALTH

Reflexologists say they can alleviate symptoms of PMS, asthma and anxiety by massaging pressure points on the feet. There is no scientific evidence to support this complementary treatment, but its popularity grows. Professor Edzard Ernst continues his series

Footloose and pain-free

Reflexology goes back to a form of treatment developed by the Indian tribes of North America. In recent years, it has become one of the most popular complementary therapies. About 6,000 therapists practise in the UK at present and this number is growing steadily.

Reflexologists describe their therapy as the "practice of working on reflexes in such a way as to produce a relaxation and response in the corresponding body regions. By applying controlled pressure with the thumbs or index fingers to the reflex points and areas on the feet, the body is stimulated to achieve its own state of equilibrium and good health. Pressure on the reflexes not only affects the organ or region of the body but it also influences the relationship between the different functions, processes and parts."

The foot, ear, hand, back and other body locations are believed to represent "holographic reiterations of the anatomy of the body," or a "perfect microcosm or miniature map of the whole body," or a "scanner screen-recording bodily functions." Maps were drawn up where one particular area of the foot's sole is assumed to represent one particular internal organ or organ system. These maps are based on the assumption that 10 "energy zones" run longitudinally through the body. Each foot has five of these lines, and all body organs are believed to lie along one or more of these lines.

Reflexologists postulate that a malfunctioning organ or body system leads to deposits of uric acid or calcium crystals. These, in turn, impinge on the nerve endings on the feet or obstruct the lymph flow. Treatment aims at breaking down the deposits so that they can be reabsorbed and eliminated. Reflexol-

ogists also believe that treatment can improve blood flow and that reflex points are nerve receptors whose stimulation will induce "deep relaxation" or emit "impulses to all parts of the body." Other hypotheses involve the lymphatic system, suggesting that the body's waste products are removed through reflexology massage, and the general enhancement of the body's inherent balance. All of these theories are unsubstantiated. A scientific rationale for reflexology simply does not exist.

By searching for "blockages" or increased areas of sensitivity on the foot, reflexologists also diagnose diseases or organ malfunctions. A positive finding in the reflex zone of the kidney, for instance, would imply to a reflexologist that the patient suffers from kidney disease. As with most other complementary diagnostic techniques (Box 1), there is no evidence to support the validity of such diagnoses.

What happens during a reflexology session?

The reflexologist would normally take a short case history of the patient; few will carry out an actual conventional physical examination. Patients are then asked to lie down and show their feet. Treatment usually consists of palpating and massaging the feet. Sometimes other parts of the body, such as the hands, are also treated. Reflexology can be mildly painful, but it is normally agreeable and also intensely relaxing.

Prices can vary between £30 and £40 for one 30-minute session. Six to 12 treatments per series are usually recommended. Thus, the total costs for one series of treatments can be up to £240. Since reflexologists usually treat chronic conditions that often require repeated attention, a total bill of something in the region of £1,000 per patient per year may not be exceptional.



Palpating and massaging the feet can be mildly painful, but it is normally agreeable and intensely relaxing

Bill Fleming

CLINICAL TRIALS

CONDITION	RESULT
■ Anxiety	Positive
■ Headache	Negative
■ Asthma	Negative
■ Post-op treatment	Inconclusive
■ PMS	Positive

The above indications are not based on evidence from controlled clinical trials. In fact, only very few such studies have been published. The only conditions for which encouraging trial data exists are anxiety and pre-menstrual syndrome. In both cases, the studies have not been

COMPLEMENTARY TECHNIQUES

- Applied kinesiology shown to be unreliable by at least one research group
- Bioresonance - shown to be unreliable in the majority of tests
- Iridology - shown to be unreliable by at least four research groups
- Kirlian photography - not

- scientifically proven and evidence is contradictory
- Radionics - not scientifically proven and evidence is contradictory
- Reflexology - shown to be unreliable by two independent research groups
- Vega test - shown to be unreliable by most tests

replicated by independent research groups, a precondition that is required before accepting results as reliable.

What are the potential risks? ■ No adverse effects of reflexology are on record. The treatment is

according to books on the subject, contra-indicated in conditions such as heart problems or shingles. This obviously carries risks. Furthermore, considerable harm can be caused by using reflexology as a diagnostic tool: it is likely that some healthy individuals will be declared

ill, while some diseased people will be pronounced healthy. In the most extreme cases, this may result in the cost of lives.

In conclusion Reflexology is popular, usually perceived as relaxing and, as a therapy, carries few risks. Unfortunately, there is as yet no truly convincing evidence that it is specifically effective for any medical conditions. The diagnosis of disease through reflexology is also likely to cause harm. This, unfortunately, applies to several diagnostic techniques that are used in complementary medicine.

Association of Reflexologists, 19 Benson Road, Henfield BN5 9HY

For further reading, *The Reflexology Handbook* by Norman L. The Bath Press, 1983

Pain in the buttocks

DURING TWO pregnancies over the last four years I developed a painful form of acne over my buttocks. This has now happened again, though I'm not pregnant. It makes swimming in public impossible, and rather dents one's libido. My husband urges me to see my GP but I couldn't bear the embarrassment. Is there anything I can do about it?

A QUESTION OF HEALTH



DR FRED KAVALIER

whether this helps - but it may take many months before there you see any effect.

A few other ideas are: try an anti-fungal cream such as Canesten which you can obtain from any chemist; use an anti-bacterial skin wash such as Betadine Skin Cleanser. But in the end, it may be better to suffer the embarrassment of showing the rash to a GP or dermatologist.

WHAT ARE the benefits of exercise cycles, and for whom? Exercise cycles provide aerobic exercise, which is good for the heart and lungs. A recent study in *The Lancet* showed that middle-aged men who improved their level of physical fitness reduced their death rate by 50 per cent. Regular use of an exercise cycle would be an excellent way of following the example of these men.

Exercise cycles also strengthen muscles and improve circulation in the legs. Any exercise that puts a stress on the bones is a useful way of preventing osteoporosis, and cycling will improve the strength of the leg bones. Exercise is also a potent way of reducing anxiety and depression. So an exercise cycle is beneficial in many ways. Compared with riding a real bicycle, there is the added benefit of not having to contend with car drivers.

YOU RECENTLY suggested "a diet that includes at least five portions of fresh fruit and vegetables a day". How big is a portion? Without a definition, how can I know if I am eating too little, or too much? A medium-sized apple or banana is a single portion. This usually weighs 125-150g. The same applies to other fruits or vegetables. Don't worry about having too much. Within reason, the more you eat, the better.

Please send questions to A Question of Health, *The Independent*, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 3DL, fax 0171-333 2182, or e-mail to health@independent.co.uk. Dr Kavalier cannot respond personally to questions

It turns your world upside down

But new drugs bring increased hopes for younger Parkinson's sufferers. By Roger Dobson

MICHAEL J FOX was astonished when a small twitch in the little finger of his left hand was diagnosed as the first symptom of Parkinson's disease.

The star of *Back to the Future* and *Bright Light* was only 30 when he was told he had the disease but, like many other young sufferers, he could have been forgiven for believing that Parkinson's affects only older people.

But new research shows that although most sufferers are aged over 60, one in 20 of them will get the disease when they are under 40, and the incurable condition has been diagnosed in patients as young as 23.

A growing realisation that younger people are getting the disease, and an awareness that the incidence of Parkinson's is increasing because of the ageing population, have both given added impetus to research.

This month a new drug, which has been shown in trials to combat tremor as well as other symptoms, with few side-effects, is being launched in Britain; other drugs are in the pipeline: the scope and range of brain surgery for controlling symptoms is increasing, too.

Although Parkinson's was first described as a disease in 1817, its causes are still not fully understood and there is as yet no sign of a cure. Latest thinking is that some people may be born with a genetic predisposition to the disease and that it is triggered in them as a result of exposure to a toxin in the environment, or to a virus.

Whatever this trigger may be, and theories have ranged from insecticides to herpes-type viruses, the result is the loss from the brain of dopamine, a chemical involved in a range of tasks including movement control and coordination. The loss of dopamine can result in tremor, muscle rigidity, slowed motion, a shuffling gait, dizziness, speech problems, reduced body lang-



Michael J Fox was diagnosed with Parkinson's at 30, seven years ago

uage and loss of facial expression. These symptoms get worse over time.

New research by the European Parkinson's Disease Association has found that it is the tremor, the symptom most difficult to control with drugs, that is a major everyday problem for eight out of 10 sufferers.

For many, the twitch or tremor is also the first symptom of the degenerative disease. This involuntary movement usually begins in the hands and increases in intensity with anxiety. Over time it can also start to affect the arms and legs.

Many other symptoms can be tackled by drugs, but most have side-effects. Levodopa, for instance, one of the most widely prescribed drugs, helps restore dopamine levels for a time, then begins to wear off and can result in the patient suffering sudden, violent movements.

One of the main problems with existing drugs is that although they prolong life, the side-effects can affect the quality. The issue of adverse effects from long-term use is heightened in cases where the patient is at the lower end of the age range for the disease.

"When you give them dopamine it reverses the clock and can put them back to normal," says Professor Leslie Findley, a consultant neurologist who is vice-chairman of the Parkinson's Disease Society in the UK, and medical adviser to the National Tremor Foundation. "There is usually a good response for four or five years, but then they start having problems."

"So in younger patients we are tending to delay treatment with drugs such as levodopa and to use reduced doses. There is a real need for doctors to consider new therapies that will prolong the

window of effective treatment for people with Parkinson's."

One new drug, Mirapexin, is coming on to the market this month, and clinical trials have shown that it significantly improves the tremor symptoms.

"Mirapexin seems to be well tolerated with few side-effects, and may prove to be a significant pharmacological advance," says Professor Findley.

Surgery is also undergoing something of a renaissance. Traditionally it has been the tremor alone that has been removed, by creating a lesion in the right place inside the brain, but specialists are now looking at working on other areas of the brain for relieving symptoms such as slowness and loss of balance.

Many specialists now believe it unlikely that there will ever be a cure that will reverse the process and remove all the different symptoms. "A lot of us are thinking much more about preventive action. It may be that one day we will be able to pick up those that are genetically vulnerable and be able to take some kind of action to stop it from ever developing," adds Professor Findley.

For those who already have the disease, such as Michael J Fox, the emphasis is on prolonging life and maintaining its quality, by drugs or surgery, or both. The New York-based actor, now 37, who has already undergone one session of surgery to try to control his tremor, says that the disease has turned his world upside down, and he recognises that maintaining quality of life will be increasingly important.

"It's made me stronger, a million times wiser and more compassionate," he says. "I've realised I'm vulnerable, and that no matter how many awards I'm given or how big my bank balance is, you can be messed with like this. The end of the story is, you die. So accepting all that, the issue then becomes one about quality of life."

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Bobbie Knighton has two healthy children, Charles, six and Georgina, four. Her third baby suffered from spina bifida, caused by folic acid deficiency during pregnancy. Keith Dobney

Why we need flour power

Adding folic acid to flour could reduce birth defects. So why hasn't it happened? By Annabel Ferriman

Bobbie Knighton felt super-fit during her third pregnancy. She ate a good diet, gave up alcohol and conscientiously attended all her antenatal check-ups. Her blood test at 18 weeks was normal, and the baby was active.

So when she went for her routine ultrasound scan at 20 weeks she was in a positive mood. Her daughter Georgina, now four, was particularly excited at the prospect of having a little brother or sister.

During the scan, however, the radiographer fell silent and took an exceptionally long time, checking every measurement. She then told Bobbie and her husband that something was seriously wrong with the baby, and that she would have to fetch the consultant.

Within 15 minutes, the Knightons, who live in Baldock, Hertfordshire, were given the news that their child - a girl - had severe spina bifida, a defect in which part of the spinal column fails to develop completely, leaving the spinal cord exposed. The baby also had a misshapen head, which suggested that she was suffering from hydrocephalus (water on the brain).

Mrs Knighton went into hospital the next day for a termination. "The labour lasted almost 24 hours and was much worse than my previous labours," she says, "because my body was not ready to deliver the baby. Mother Nature was telling me to hold on."

"The experience was horrific. Part of me died that day. We named

the baby Ellen, and we both held her. We had a service for her and planted a rose tree in her memory. "We have delayed having any more children because we were frightened of having another child out of grief."

One of the tragedies of this case is that it probably could have been prevented. Scientists discovered as long ago as 1991 - five years before Mrs Knighton's pregnancy - that if mothers increased their intake of folic acid (a vitamin occurring in liver, green leafy vegetables and certain other foods) around the time of conception their risk of having a baby affected by spina bifida could be reduced by two-thirds.

Yet today, more than seven years later, the spectre of spina bifida is still haunting many pregnancies. More than 1,000 women a year in the UK discover that they are carrying a baby affected by a neural tube defect (mainly spina bifida and hydrocephalus) and about 850 of them go through a traumatic and painful termination.

An obvious solution to the problem was put forward in the *British Medical Journal* in 1995 by Nicholas Wald, professor of environmental and preventive medicine at St Bartholomew's Hospital, London, who suggested that flour manufacturers should be required to fortify flour with folic acid to ensure that all women of child-bearing age consume a high enough dose to reduce the risk.

Flour is already fortified with calcium, iron, niacin and thiamine, so adding one more vitamin would not

be such a big step. The then-Conservative government, however, decided to opt for a less interventionist policy. It mounted a publicity campaign to persuade women to increase their intake of folic acid.

That campaign has now come to an end, and despite having won an international prize from the World Health Organisation, it has not yet had the desired effect. It cost more than £2.3m and there is no evidence that it has significantly reduced the number of affected pregnancies.

During the scan, the radiographer fell silent and took an exceptionally long time, checking every measurement...

The reason is simple: the women most at risk of having a baby with spina bifida are those who eat a diet lacking in natural vitamins and these are the same women who are the least likely to have heard of the campaign. Also, half of all pregnancies are unplanned, so most women do not start taking a supplement, such as iron or folic acid, until after a positive pregnancy test, by which time it is too late to prevent neural tube defects. Even well-educated women like Mrs Knighton often do not start taking it until two months into pregnancy.

"The current strategy of encouraging women to take supplements does not reach those women

who become pregnant accidentally," said Tony Britton, spokesman for the Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (Asbah).

"There is enough known about the safety of folic acid for the Government to require millers to put folic acid into flour just as the Food and Drug Administration in the US has done since January."

That is a view with which many specialists concur. Dr Richard Smith, editor of the *BMJ*, recommended the same thing in his

dietary supplements instead. But in 1997 the incoming Labour government appointed the first-ever minister of public health, and things looked likely to change.

Professor Sir John Grimley Evans, who chairs the government's subgroup on folic acid, and is a member of the Committee on the Medical Aspects of Food (Coma), says there are two important reasons why the decision to fortify flour has been delayed.

"First, there is concern about the interaction between folic acid and pernicious anaemia, a condition caused by a deficiency of vitamin B12, which can lead to neural damage. If people who are developing pernicious anaemia take too much folic acid, it can mask the anaemia, but lead to neurological damage before its true cause - vitamin B12 deficiency - is discovered."

Professor Wald believes that this problem can be overcome by teaching doctors to diagnose pernicious anaemia with greater clinical precision, while other experts believe the proposed level of folic acid enrichment would not be enough to cause problems.

The Government's subgroup on folic acid is expected to clear up doubts in this area shortly. Unfortunately, the issue has more recently been clouded by research into other effects of folic acid. Scientists have discovered new evidence suggesting that if adults increase their intake of folic acid, they may reduce their risk of cardiovascular disease. The Government's experts on folic acid

are now wondering whether this matter should be clarified before making any recommendation on fortifying food.

"There has not been a controlled trial to show that giving folic acid reduces cardiovascular disease," commented Professor Sir John Grimley Evans.

"If flour were fortified with folic acid, it would be impossible to conduct such a trial in the UK, or to discover the ideal amount of folic acid to give," he explained, "because everyone would be consuming more in their diet."

Sir John admitted that a trial to clarify the effects of folic acid on cardiovascular disease could take 10-15 years to complete. "There are obviously some people to whom neural tube defects are the only things that matter," he pointed out. "But we have to take to heart all the implications of fortifying food."

While academics puzzle over the new dilemma of folic acid and cardiovascular disease, more than 150 mothers a year will continue to give birth to babies with spina bifida and another 850 will go through the painful trauma of a late termination of a wanted baby.

Helen Britton, MP for Peterborough, who has been campaigning on the issue, said, "It is really outrageous that the last government dragged its heels on this. How long will women have to wait?"

Antenatal Results and Choices (formerly Support Around Termination for Foetal Abnormality): telephone helpline 0171-631 0255

Patients need justice



JEREMY LAURANCE

WHAT HAS become of the health service ombudsman? The ultimate court of appeal for those dissatisfied with their treatment by the NHS - short of going to law - is itself generating an unprecedented volume of complaints.

Six consumer organisations have expressed their discontent with the office of Michael Buckley, the current holder of the post. The National Consumer Council, the Consumers Association and the Association for Improvements in Maternity Services all believe that the interests of patients are being overlooked in the drive for administrative efficiency.

The charge is that, at a time when complaints are rising to record levels, the number being investigated has fallen. In 1995-6 there were 229 investigations completed, in 1996-7 there were 238; but in 1997-8 the total dropped to 120. This fall has occurred just as the ombudsman's remit has been extended into two new areas - clinical complaints and GPs.

The findings show the NHS under extreme pressure. Hospitals are operating so close to the limit of their capacity that when a clutch of emergencies occur at once they can find themselves unable to cope. One man dangerously ill with Legionnaire's disease waited six hours to be transferred to the intensive care unit of a neighbouring hospital, because no anaesthetist was free to insert a tube into his lungs so that he could be ventilated on the journey. However, the anaesthetists escaped criticism because all three on duty were dealing with even sicker patients.

In a second case, a woman with liver cancer was denied an ultrasound test by her surgeon because he did not think anything could be done to save her. The ombudsman criticised the decision because it meant that the woman had been denied the chance of knowing the cause of her illness.

These cases should lead to improved NHS care - but only if they are investigated and publicised. The ombudsman's office says the apparent drop in its case load conceals extra work being done behind the scenes. More complaints are being settled informally with, in some cases, a simple phone call to the hospital involved, an apology and a promise to do better next time.

The argument is that a full formal investigation is neither necessary nor appropriate in every case. Often it is clear what happened, but the complainant has never had it explained in language they can understand. Settling complaints informally is a sensible use of people's time and speeds things up. Settling up a full investigation in every case would be "stupid and wasteful".

Sensible as this sounds, the ombudsman is appointed not only to ensure that justice is done, but to ensure that it is seen to be done. His responsibility does not end with satisfying the complainant; it includes ensuring that the lessons are learnt and errors are not repeated. Visibility is as important as impartiality.

An informal procedure can work only if steps are taken to ensure that those beyond the immediate case learn from the mistakes. The ombudsman must ensure that the work of his office is open and transparent, and his findings are widely circulated.

Is it your relationship that needs help - or you?

OBVIOUSLY DIVORCE often causes depression but what about the other way around: could depression equally cause divorce? Certainly, there is a simple correlation between the two. Rates of depression have risen tenfold since 1950 and divorce has quadrupled, but sorting out cause from effect is not easy.

Ever since the 1960s it has been widely supposed that divorcing couples were incompatible and that each would be happier if they found someone more suitable. The possibility that one or both partners were simply depressed and thus impossible to live with has rarely been considered. Yet there is abundant evidence that a pre-existing, premarital disposition to depression destroys innumerable marriages.

Depressed partners are prone to be hostile, paranoid and aggressive with intimates, while often placid, compliant and pleasing to friends and colleagues. So it comes as no surprise that depressives are also more likely to divorce. As the leading American depression researcher Myrna Weissman put it: "Marital relationships become an arena for the depression."

Researchers find that couples with a depressive member are more disharmonious. A study that followed 56 married depressives over a two-year period found they were nine times more likely to divorce than the general population. But which comes first, the marital disharmony or the depression? There are two theories.

The first, dominant one pinpoints "marital incompatibility" as the cause. Troubled marriages are seen as the product of ineffectual communication patterns resulting from personal incompatibility.

The American psychologist John Gottman asked over 100 newlywed couples to pick a perennial bone of contention and videotaped their ensuing discussion. He found that the way they dealt with the problem predicted whether they were still together four years later. In this view, successful marriage is a case of finding the right person and making sure that destructive patterns of problem solving do not develop.

That this perspective became so popular during the period after 1965 when millions of dissatisfied husbands and wives were asking

OLIVER JAMES



BRITAIN ON THE COUCH

themselves if they were with the right partner may be no coincidence. Of course, unhappy marriages can cause previously stable and well-adjusted individuals to develop depression but this view has become so dominant that the alternative has been almost totally forgotten: that emotional problems predate the marriage in one or both of the partners could cause the marital problems.

In this view, there are people whose personalities would have put them at high risk of divorce whatever they had married. In order to test the theory, a study would ideally

have followed a large sample from childhood to late adulthood. Only then would it be clear how much any emotional problems preceded the marriage. No studies have gone as far back as that but seven have tested the personalities of couples shortly before they married and followed up what happened to them subsequently.

In all of these, premaritally depressed women were more likely to subsequently divorce than under-pressed ones. One British study found that mild depression in girls at age 16 predicted subsequent increased risk of divorce. But the findings did not only apply to women.

Premaritally disordered men were also more at risk although their problems did not show up in the form of depression but as aggression. Lack of impulse control - short temper, ill-considered deeds and words - in husbands predicted subsequent disharmony and divorce compared with men without these traits before marriage.

The differences between men and women may reflect differences in the way the genders express aggression. Women are more likely to

blame themselves when frustrated and angry whereas men blame others and launch attacks. Hence, depression is twice as common in women worldwide whereas men tend to deny they are depressed, and instead become aggressive. They are seven times more likely to commit violent crimes.

But, interestingly, three-quarters of convicted violent men became depressed when prevented from lashing out by imprisonment, a far higher proportion than men imprisoned for nonviolent crimes. Since most violent men are impulsive and since violence is the male method of expressing depression, the high divorce rate of impulsive men may ultimately be a sign that they are also depressive.

An eighth study, the most rigorous of the lot, supports the theory. It followed 300 married couples from before they had married in 1940, to 1980. Those who divorced were significantly more likely to have had emotional problems before they married than those who stayed married. Divorcees of both sexes were more likely to have been premaritally depressed - men as

well as women - and the divorced men were more likely to have lacked impulse control.

The authors concluded: "The husband's impulsiveness and the depressiveness of both spouses are potent predictors of negative marital outcomes... in marital relationships, depression acts to bring about distress, and the other traits of the husband help to determine whether the distress is brought to a head (in divorce) or suffered passively (in a stable but unsatisfactory marriage)."

Of course there is such a thing as incompatibility. But more often than not, both partners will benefit from looking hard at their own pathology before blaming the relationship and splitting up only to repeat the same pattern later. Much more often than is currently supposed, it is the individual and not the Relationship that needs treatment.

Oliver James's book *Britain On The Couch - Why We're Unhappier Compared With 1950 Despite Being Richer*, is now available in paperback (Arrow, £7.99)

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MARIE STOPES HEALTH CLINICS

MEDIA

Have we got (no) news for you

The future surrounding ITV's successful campaign to ditch its flagship *News at Ten* has meant that the efforts of those who run Britain's most-watched commercial station to downgrade their commitment to network news has not exactly gone unnoticed. But their equally successful strategy to demote ITV of serious current affairs has provoked little uproar because it has been done more slowly and stealthily. The combined effect, however, is producing a significant shift in the country's television culture: as of next year, prime-time ITV becomes a no-go area for mainstream news and current affairs.

This change marks the end of ITV's pretensions still to be regarded as a public-service broadcaster and calls into question whether its lapdog regulator, the Independent Television Commission (ITC), has any further purpose. For viewers it means that those who wish to follow current affairs in more depth and with more rigour than superficial tabloid values allow will be forced to have to depend almost entirely on the BBC – a broadcasting monopoly which is hardly healthy for a vibrant democracy.

Those of us who have followed ITV's long and troubled relations with its ITC paymasters are not surprised by the demise of *News at Ten*. It is widely known that ITV tried to kill it in 1993 and was only stopped by some heavyweight disapproval from the then prime minister. What has been forgotten in an industry with short memories is that ITV never wanted *News at Ten* in the first place.

When *News at Ten* was launched in the late Sixties on the back of the successful move to half-hour prime-time newscasts by the American networks, it had to be forced on the ITV companies by the then regulator, the IBA. Even reluctant ITV bosses insisted on a short trial period of several weeks; they hoped to kill it off after that. It was only because the fledgling news programme proved to be such a ratings and critical success that they became reconciled to its survival (and the BBC quickly launched a half-hour news of its own).

But news has never been a priority for those who run ITV. The regional pandemics of commercial TV were happy to dine out on the numerous industry awards to ITV and to bask in its international reputation. For a long period, under the editorship of David Nicholas and with Alastair Burnet as its main anchor, ITV was widely regarded as more authoritative and innovative than anything BBC news had to offer. But ITV kept it on a tight budget, never allowed it to develop its own

THE NEIL REPORT



ANDREW NEIL

distinctive documentary strand despite the great brand name and, unlike the US networks, steadfastly refused to market and promote news as an integral and essential part of the schedule. Even as ITV bosses were bemoaning the recent slip in *News at Ten*'s ratings as TV channels have proliferated, they did nothing to revive them through on-air and print promotion of the programme and its presenters. Perhaps they feared that such marketing would be too successful.

The main regional ITV baronies in London, Birmingham and Manchester resisted ITV's wish to di-

The death of 'News at Ten' comes at a time when there is no longer any regular serious current affairs on ITV

versify into documentaries and current affairs because it would have been competition for their own network offerings. And, as long as Granada was making *World in Action* and Thames producing *This Week* – both broadcast at peak viewing times – viewers in search of serious current affairs were not necessarily cheated. But the death of *News at Ten* comes at a time when there is no longer any regular serious current affairs on ITV, at least not at a time when most of us want to watch.

This Week, which used to provide weekly commentary and analysis on mainstream politics, no longer exists. The various – and increasingly tabloid – offerings which replaced it have all bombed (and none had the serious purpose of *This Week*). *World in Action* has survived – and at peak time – but only at the cost of relentless dumbing down: its

hard-edged investigative journalism has given way to a tabloid agenda, with much emphasis on consumer concerns and stunts (its current contribution to the devolution debate has been to ask actors to wear anti-Scottish T-shirts in Glasgow to test the reaction).

I had a huge row with *This Week* over its flawed "Death on the Rock" documentary, and the relentless left-wing bias of *World in Action* used to grate (though it once did a wonderful expose of Gerry Adams' terrorist past). But nobody could deny they were quality programmes with a serious purpose. Nothing like them now exists anywhere on ITV's network schedules.

Indeed, ITV can no longer be bothered to provide live Budget coverage, it is increasingly reluctant to interrupt its regular entertainment shows with breaking news coverage and it has lost all interest in live coverage of important national events, unless they are surefire ratings winners, like the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales. The network's sole contribution to serious discussion of mainstream politics, Jonathan Dimbleby, is buried in the Sunday lunchtime slot and, though professionally presented, lacks the impact or authority of its predecessors. *Weekend World* and Brian Walden (both of which were broadcast just before Sunday lunch rather than during it).

This is a pathetic state of affairs for a network that still claims it adheres to public-service obligations in order to protect its position as the nation's premier commercial channel. The excuse most commonly trotted out by those who control it is that the government has made TV so competitive, with new channels springing up all over the place, that it can no longer afford to broadcast current affairs programmes with limited appeal in prime time. This is self-serving nonsense.

The American commercial networks face far greater competition than ITV (over 70 per cent of US homes are multi-channel, compared with around 20 per cent in Britain) yet they manage to provide a more considerable diet of network news and current affairs while their local affiliates all provide substantial local news programming.

No major US network would fail to broadcast live the President's state of the union address or other important national events. All regularly interrupt their schedules with breaking news. They spend substantial sums promoting their news programmes and their anchors. Sunday morning is wall-to-wall political discussion. And news magazine shows increasingly dominate prime-time ratings (four of them are among the 20 most-watched programmes in America).



'World in Action' (top) has turned to a tabloid agenda, dealing with issues such as pet food, and Jonathan Dimbleby's Sunday current affairs programme (above left) does not match the journalistic depth of 'This Week' (above right)

This is all done in America without the cajoling of a regulator. Yet ITV, which remains far more cosseted from market forces than any US network, can manage none of this, despite making profits of over £400m last year. Clearly, the problem at ITV is not just the failure of regulation: its traditions are also being undermined by the priorities of those who control it.

They promise a weekly American-style news magazine at 10pm as a

sop to critics but, unlike the US networks, British television seems unable to popularise without trivialising. The suspicion remains that it has scrapped *News at Ten* to make way for more uplifting programmes like the recently broadcast *Vice: The Sex Trade*, which no supposedly vulgar mainstream US network would dream of showing.

ITV is able to get away with all this because the ITC has been nobled by the ITV companies. The ITC

is a shadow of its former self, run by an unknown and undistinguished businessman with little experience of TV and populated by bureaucrats who do ITV's bidding. When no ITV bosses would appear live on BBC's *Newsnight* recently (so much for public accountability) to defend the end of *News at Ten*, the ITC's director of programmes obligingly stepped in to put ITV's case.

In America it is known as "regulatory capture": those doing the

regulating end up in thrall to the powerful commercial interests they are supposed to be controlling. But now that the ITC has sold the pass on ITV's public-service obligations, it is difficult to divine any purpose in the further squandering of taxpayers' money on a lame-duck television regulator.

Andrew Neil is the editor-in-chief of 'Sunday Business' and 'The Scotsman'

The original lads' magazine is in need of reloading

ANALYSIS
PAUL MCCANN

YOU HAVE to feel sorry for Derek Harbinson, who was the editor of *Loaded* until last week when he was replaced by one of the founders of the magazine.

There he was, quietly editing a magazine which, since his high-profile predecessor James Brown left last year, has increased sales by 20 per cent. A 20-per-cent sale increase in a year should be anybody's idea of success, and enough to safeguard your job, but it seems not. Harbinson put on a brave face last week and maintained that "There are other things I want to do with my career and it's true to the *Loaded* spirit to go out on a high."

But it is beyond doubt that the magazine's owner, IPC, and his replacement, former deputy editor and founder Tim Southwell, seem to see things slightly differently.

"I feel the magazine has been treading water for the last year-and-a-half," says Southwell. "It has been lacking urgency and lacking any sense of surprise. I want to put that back. I want to get back to the core editorial principles – which is that just about anything can happen in the pages of *Loaded*."

ket that 20 per cent growth just does not cut it.

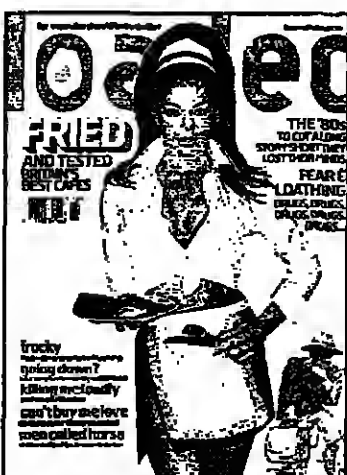
Southwell says that the magazine has been putting "nobodies" on its cover and has started to look increasingly like an also-ran. "We have been letting the readers down and I want to put the *Loaded* ethos back into every single page. I am under pressure to increase circulation, but I haven't been given any specific targets."

Southwell should be the man to do it, but it is a sign of how desperate IPC is for a change that they have brought him back after he had a serious falling out with the company. Southwell was with James Brown in Barcelona watching Leeds United when the idea for *Loaded* was developed. That is to say it developed straight out of a night's drinking, watching football and chatting up women.

He became deputy editor before the launch in 1993, and by the time he left in November 1996, he was editing more and more of the magazine during Brown's increasing absences from the magazine.

"Tim has never had the credit for what he put into *Loaded*," says the editorial director of a rival magazine group. "He was there right at the beginning and there an awful lot more at the end."

According to his book on *Loaded* – *Getting Away With It* – Southwell was getting increasingly disenchanted with IPC's management of the magazine. He felt advertising



'Loaded' – not selling enough

was squeezing his good ideas and the company was refusing to expand the title into new countries. He was also falling out more and more with James Brown.

He eventually left and six months later James Brown departed to edit Condé Nast's *GQ*. Southwell, meanwhile, was working on a dummy magazine with the working title of *The Player*, which was to be a title for wannabe high-rollers; a kind of *Fortune* magazine with attitude. After much work, IPC decided not to go with it and Southwell left the company looking for someone else to back the idea. His dissatisfaction with IPC increased when the company refused to sell

him the rights to the idea he had developed. He wrote his book about the magazine, which is less than flattering about IPC management.

"Well, they approached me," says Southwell, indicating that he and IPC have made up. "They gave me time to think about it – the more I thought about it, the more excited I got." Southwell, it seems, is the true *Loaded* believer and could not turn down the opportunity of rescuing his baby. "I just want to get the staff back to thinking for themselves – to give it more bite and more attitude. It was always driven by madcap ideas – a combination of the Double Decker and Carry On Publishing – and I just want it to have more extreme ideas."

Southwell is known to want to make the magazine more sophisticated – perhaps more like his work on *The Player*. This would be the direct opposite of what Derek Harbinson was doing, and might also be the direct opposite of what the rest of the market is doing.

The problem for Southwell is that when *Loaded* was at its editorial peak, nothing much was expected of it. IPC's management left it well alone and the editorial team could spend all day in the pub coming up with a feature as inspired as "The Crisp Olympics" – which was a kind of taste play-off between different salty snacks.

But since then, IPC has been bought out from its parent, Reed Elsevier, and *Loaded* is a very large money-maker for the company. Southwell might just find that "madcap" and "crucial revenue earner" are not phrases to trip happily from his finance director's tongue.

SEVERAL INTRIGUING issues arise out of Channel 4's *Hard News* special on *The Guardian's* investigation into whether the Carlton documentary, *The Connection*, was in fact a fake (brief summary: the mule may or may not have been a mule, but the producer of *The Connection* was clearly a complete ass). *Hard News* broadly agrees with *The Guardian* that *The Connection* misled viewers, which is not what programme makers are supposed to do at all. So clearly there will be no welcome mat for them outside Channel 4's glass and chrome revolving door. Er, not exactly. The wonderfully benevolent beak of news and current affairs, David Lloyd, says that he would not necessarily banish *The Connection* producer, Marc de Beaufort, from his threshold. "I'd like to think my door is never closed," Lloyd says.

The programme's executive producer, Roger James, has already done rather better out of Lloyd and landed a job. James is filling a similar role on a new Channel 4 series about the EU called *Inside Europe*, to be made by the team responsible for the landmark *Town Hall*. "It's strictly observational," says a Channel 4 spoketype. So that's alright then.

YOU MIGHT have seen a story in the newspapers yesterday about two female college friends in their early twenties who died of carbon monoxide poisoning from a faulty gas boiler at a Shropshire B&B. The headline used by a local press agency to alert the hungry national press on Sunday: "Dead and breakfast."

AND NOW over to Sue Lawley for the BBC *Review of the Year*. It is just the sort of programme (in the increasing absence of access to anything live) that the corporation

THE WORD
ON THE
STREET

does terribly well – lots of fine archive footage, slickly edited and overlaid with some achingly appropriate soundtrack (we're currently running a sweep on how minutes will elapse before *The Verve's* "Bitter Sweet Symphony" is pressed into service). This year's theme for the BBC extravaganza? The digital age (as in "we're playing a full and active part in"). The venue? Errm. Sky. "Some of the links, and we stress some, are being filmed at Sky's digital control centre," explains a BBC spoketype. "If we were making a film about canning, we'd make it in a canning factory."

IS THAT yet another story I see before me of marital infidelity involving old Viagra lips himself, Mick Jagger? And is that an upcoming Rolling Stones tour badly in need of some advance publicity? This time it's 29-year-old model Luciana Gimenez Morad, who tells pals and *The Sun*: "I'm having Jagger's baby." If it's true, then it can only mean

two things: one, there's still life in the old dog; two, she can bring the kid along to next June's show at Wembley.

ITV'S RELATIVELY poor track record in comedy has prompted the network to seek help from the US – the producers of *The Cosby Show* and *Roseanne* are currently creating a sitcom set in the Seventies, presumably on the basis that that was when ITV last produced a decent sitcom. The transatlantic recruitment drive will not surprise anyone who saw *Minding the Baby*, but it mystifies Graham Linehan, co-creator of *Father Ted* and *Big Train*, who thinks that, what with *The Royle Family*, *Goodness Gracious Me* and *Alan Partridge* (all BBC shows), British comedy writing is going through something of a golden age at the moment. "Bringing in American producers may work but it's an act of desperation when no desperation is called for," says Linehan. "I cannot see it getting much better, unless the *Day Today* team reform, or Vic and Bob get their fairies out again."

"BIGGEST EVER poll rejects joining Euro", announces the *Sunday Telegraph*, which then goes on to tell readers that public support for British entry into the single currency is "in steep decline". Rather like the paper's definition of current affairs. The poll referred to in the piece was carried out before last year's election. In fact, according to a report by Social and Community Planning Research (the body that conducted the original poll) published today, it is opposition to the single currency that is falling. Next week in the *Sunday Telegraph*: "Massive backing for Britain to send task force to the Falklands."

RACE IN THE MEDIA

In plain black and white

The picture on the right shows a typical Fleet Street scrum of snappers, hacks and camera crews. And barely a black face in sight. By Rhys Williams

DOES ANYONE know precisely how many journalists working in the national press are drawn from ethnic minorities? More to the point, does anyone in the national press actually care?

The answer to the first one is almost certainly "no". As for the second, well, judging by the complete lack of any systematic ethnic monitoring on any of our national titles (including this one), the current response runs something along the lines of "probably not", or at least "not enough".

Politicians ducking uncomfortable truths habitually head for the nearest statistic and hide. The newspaper industry seeking similar refuge will find precious little behind which to crouch. The National Union of Journalists estimates that around 1.8 per cent of its 28,000 members are from ethnic minorities, a figure based on a voluntary questionnaire enclosed with each membership application form.

According to the most recent research available, carried out six months ago by Beulah Ainley, author of the book *Black Journalists White Media*, there are only 24 non-white staff journalists on the national press; that's 24 out of approximately 3,000. The union believes the figure is slightly higher, but puts it above no more than a "few dozen".

"The situation is very fluid," explains Ms Ainley, who is also a former member of the NUJ's Black Members Council. "People come and go all the time, which makes it difficult to be precise, and of course there may be more writing and contributing freelance like myself. But they won't be getting the benefits of full-time work: holidays, sick pay, pensions."

Whichever figure you believe - and they are all contestable - the total lags some way behind the 6 per cent of the national population that blacks and Asians constitute.



Baz Bamigboye of the Daily Mail and C4's Zeinab Badawi

Newspaper editors do not need surveys to tell them that ethnic minorities are under-represented: they can look out across the office every morning and see it in the faces of their staff.

"The press have for months been reporting the Stephen Lawrence inquiry and the under-representation of black people in the police force," says Ms Ainley. "They fail to report that they employ even fewer black people than the police. I don't think there is any direct racism, and certainly no black journalists I spoke to

have said that.

"No editor says 'we're not going to employ black people'. It's just that they don't take it very seriously. The biggest problem is that it's not seen as a problem at all."

Does it matter? "Yes, because the media is the visible face of society," says Chris Myant, of the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE). "It is a key way that people see role models and positive images. Positive images in the sense that if Trevor McDonald reads the news or the editor of a national newspaper is Asian, then it sends out the right messages about career possibilities. It also defies the stereotype that black people are either thick or lazy."

"I also think it helps the media better understand issues of race in society. One reason the print media has had such difficulties in relation to race issues is race equality is not a part of their everyday life."

The CRE confirms what most suspect or probably know to be the case: in terms of equal opportunities, broadcasting has moved into the digital age while print is still mucking around with typewriters and carrier pigeons.

The NUJ believes there has been some progress, but it is simply that broadcasting has taken off at such a lick that the press is positively static by comparison. It probably takes no more than 20 seconds to rattle off a list of high-profile names from the broadcast media - Trevor McDonald, Martin Bashir, Samir Shah, Zeinab Badawi, George Alagiah, Rajeev Omead, Trevor Phillips, Andi Peters, Moira Stuart.

Even for the industry-literate, it takes a few more minutes to come up with Kamal Ahmed, media editor of *The Guardian*, *The Daily Telegraph*'s Mihir Bose, Baz Bamigboye of the *Daily Mail*, *The Independent*'s columnist Yasmin Aibhai-Brown, Emma Lindsay, an *Observer* sports columnist, and



Newspaper editors do not need surveys to tell them that very few of their staff are from the ethnic minorities

Elkow Esbun, editor of *Arena* magazine. Broadcasting is, admittedly, an easier industry for the commission to lobby; relatively few players account for a hefty chunk of the business. Broadcasting is also governed by certain social responsibility obligations: the BBC's charter and the Broadcasting Act both contain provisions that relate to equal opportunities.

On the other hand, print is an unregulated mess. It is not so much a function of intent, says the CRE, as the way papers have evolved: more an issue of an unsound structure than a suspect attitude. There is no formal ethnic monitoring (although News International may well have a system in place within a year) and, almost without exception, no formal recruitment schemes beyond graduate entry.

"The fact that there are few black or Asian faces may raise the issue, but it is not evidence of discrimination," says Mr Myant. "There have been no industrial tribunal cases, for instance. It's just that the networks

through which people are recruited tend to disfavour black and Asians."

"We have to, I think, be very concerned about the lack of any formalised, open recruitment procedures for national newspapers. You almost never see a post on a national advertised, unless it's something specialist they are having more difficulty filling, like *Guardian On-line*."

"We're not saying that the issue stands or falls, or whether employers advertise posts, but it has significant impact on people's awareness and perceptions of the opportunities available. We argue that the only way forward is open, measurable, accountable procedure based on objective criteria."

In other words no more of this arcane, word of mouth nonsense which only perpetuates the present imperfections.

"It's a cultural rather than racist point," says Mr Bose, who writes about sport and business for *The Daily Telegraph*. "When newspapers recruit, it's haphazard, therefore the

old network links remain. Nobody seems to be sitting down and saying 'shouldn't we be looking at other ways of finding people?' There's not much creativity in the way people are found."

The CRE favoured strategy is to appoint sector leaders, figures who will campaign for equal opportunities in their particular fields. For example, the efforts of Clive Jones, Carlton's chief executive, have helped secure the recruitment of a special producer who ensures that the casting in programmes is suitably multicultural. Eddie George, governor of the Bank of England, has promised to publish the ethnic breakdown of his staff in the bank's annual report.

The newspaper industry's sector leader is Robin Pauley, managing editor of the *Financial Times*. Mr Pauley says that part of the problem is that many black and Asians are not applying for the FT's graduate trainee scheme in the first place.

The mix is improving, helped by adverts in the ethnic press, and for

the last two years, an Asian has been one of the two to be recruited.

Like the CRE, the NUJ believes it is time to act. But while they both share a common purpose the two have yet to formulate a joint approach. The union wants first to establish the precise levels of black and Asian staffing on the national press; it has briefed chapels to count and report back and then confront the sector with its inadequacies.

But it recognises that change, though positive, will be gradual and probably starts with training. Through the George Viner Fund, the NUJ hands out six grants worth £1,000 each every year to black and Asian students who have secured places on journalism courses.

The CRE at least senses a shift in desire. "When we went to national newspapers six years ago," says Mr Myant, "we were looked on as politically correct imbeciles."

"The feeling now is that it needs a new approach, and that we would be more successful if we were to go back today."

'I'm quitting because of racism'

Two weeks ago I participated in *Countdown to the Millennium*, an LWT programme about race relations. Max Hastings, editor of the *Evening Standard*, was there to grill people such as Sir Paul Condon, the Metropolitan Police chief, on their contributions to racial harmony.

Now, we all know Sir Paul Condon has made mistakes, but at least he is doing something about racism within the police force, encouraging blacks and Asians to apply for jobs. Hastings declared, on the programme, that whenever any "remotely qualified" non-white hacks approached his paper, they were "always" given a break.

In common with other editors, Hastings should take a leaf out of Condon's book. He should make more of an effort if he really wants to improve his paper's ethnic recruitment record. It is immoral to discriminate, especially in the only paper representing a multicultural city such as London. Also, a more multicultural image, with a couple of black and Asian picture by-lines, might help circulation.

The *Evening Standard* is not



Editors of newspapers will never admit to a racist recruitment policy. So how is it so few journalists are black? By Donu Kogbara

alone in its approach to hiring non-white journalists. I have visited many newspaper offices and I know that black and Asian faces are depressingly rare. Black and Asian applicants are openly discriminated against on one tabloid. I have talked to a photographer told to exclude "darkies" from his pictures; I know of news desks that ask the colour of a rapist or a murder victim before deciding whether to run a story. Some papers are trying to modernise. But the idea of a British national newspaper following *Newsweek* by appointing a black editor is still risible, in spite of thousands of words printed on the evils of racism.

Duran Adebayo, an award-winning novelist, told me he was so dis-

couraged by working for "ignorant" bosses on national newspapers that he eventually gave up and joined *The Voice*, the black paper. Now I am giving up too. I'm so sick of being ignored, pigeonholed and subtly insulted - and so hurt by receiving just occasional scraps from papers for whom I've done good work - that after 15 years I have begun to apply for jobs outside journalism. Yes, I'm aware that I'm not the most brilliant journalist on earth; I don't deserve a column, a staff job or vast amounts of freelance work just because I'm black. Yes, journalism is an overcrowded market; plenty of competent white hacks also have career difficulties. And no, I can't prove I've been a victim of bigotry.

But can it really be a coincidence that few non-white journalists get decent jobs or regular freelance slots? Why are my white journalist friends almost always more successful than black ones with similar qualifications? Am I imagining it when I say that I consistently get less respect and fewer opportunities?

I used to write articles in which I said black Brits would do better if they spent less time moaning about racism and more time grafting. But today I'm embittered, and more radical. The trouble is, racism is often impossible to prove. Many white newspaper executives are utterly charming. They invite you to parties and say they are colour-blind, and concerned about ethnic minorities. Some are sincere.

But most are hypocrites and closet racists who abuse (or fail constructively to use) the power they have. Because they run a vital information outlet it is difficult to criticise them publicly. But surely it is time to examine racism in the newspaper business. These smooth-talking members of the chattering classes must prove that they are as liberal as they claim.

Our fight for equality

The BBC takes equal opportunities seriously, says Bob Nelson

The BBC is one of the more successful media organisations at employing and retaining ethnic staff. At the Corporation we believe we are "nearly there". We strongly support equal opportunity practices for gender, religion and disability as well as race, and the BBC employs more ethnic minorities within its news operations proportionately than Channel 4 or the ITV companies. We have made great strides over recent years by increasing the proportion of black staff employed in senior positions.

The BBC is also a champion of the Leadership Challenge and is represented on the steering group for Race for Opportunity. We believe that representing all sectors of the communities in the United Kingdom is at the core of public service broadcasting. This applies to the representation of ethnic minorities on air, the accuracy and balance of news coverage, as well as the composition of the Corporation's staff. The BBC recognises that its

workforce should "reflect the nations, regions and communities it serves". The BBC is carrying this belief forward for the new millennium. One Statement of Promises to Viewers and Listeners for 1998/99 is "to focus on our obligation to represent all groups in society accurately, and to avoid reinforcing prejudice".

In 1990, the BBC set its first target, aiming to have 8 per cent of its overall workforce from ethnic minorities by the year 2000. Projections for the 2001 Census state that approximately 7-8.5 per cent of the total UK population will be ethnic minorities. BBC Regions also set targets at the same time, seeking to reflect the specific characteristics of the local communities they serve.

There are also training schemes, policies and positive action initiatives. One initiative has been the Asian and Afro-Caribbean Reporters Trust. It was created by the BBC in 1988 with the specific aim of increasing the

number of Afro-Caribbean and Asian journalists. Some of its first graduates are now reporting for the Six and the Nine O'Clock News. In 1996/97, the BBC spent £2.5m on diversity issues, including gender, age and disability as well as race.

The BBC is committed to developing its workforce irrespective of their ethnic origin, but operates a number of schemes for ethnic staff, in addition to the general training available. The BBC operates a mentoring system for ethnic staff, which has the specific aim of encouraging Afro-Caribbean members of staff to develop into more senior roles. As part of its ongoing development of staff, managers are offered training in racial awareness. The BBC will also look again at its targets when the 2001 Census is published.

The writer is the BBC's Head of Organisation and Management Development

It's good to Talk Radio with a real pro in charge

AT TEN minutes to eight yesterday morning just over 3 million people were listening to Britain's three national speech-based radio stations GIVE or take the odd air-waved surfer and last-minute defector to Classic FM, the number of listeners per station based on the latest ratings were as follows: 1.8 million listening to Radio 4, Lord Sainsbury on the Today programme talking about the need for British industry to be more science-based; 971,000 tuned into Radio 5's breakfast show interview with James Appleby, British Yo-Yo champion. The remaining 365,000 (correction, 365,001 with me)

were glued, ears flapping, to the astonishing revelation on Talk Radio that the real love of Diana, Princess of Wales's life was neither Dodi nor James - Charles didn't come into it - but a handsome Harley Street heart surgeon called Hazmit Khan.

The revelation might not have been quite so astonishing had I read the *Sunday People* the previous day, but hearing it straight from the horse's mouth made it more authentic. Did Neil Wallace, editor of the *People*, have photographic evidence to back up his story that the Princess, wearing a wig, used to meet her lover in a Kensington chip shop, presenter Clare

Catford wanted to know. No, said Mr Wallace, but make no mistake, Khan was the love of Dodi's life. Dodi? Sorry - Diana; he meant to say Diana.

A good breakfast show is the secret of a successful radio station, Kelvin MacKenzie, the new owner of Talk Radio, told me yesterday. It's three weeks since MacKenzie's consortium Talkco bought the station for £24.5m and regular listeners will tell you that things are looking up already, particularly the breakfast show. It's faster, punchier, funnier, a bit like *The Sun* in its heyday, when MacKenzie edited it. "Look, we're not aiming to compete with BBC breakfast shows. How can



SUE ARNOLD

we? We haven't got their billions from licence fee revenues. But what we can do is entertain." Surely he's doing that already. In the breakfast show peak

period yesterday, in the half hour between 7.30am and 8am when Radio 4 was featuring Pinochet, European defence commitments, the RUC and Lord Sainsbury and Radio 5 offered social services, the millennium bug, stress in the workplace and Yo-Yos, Clare Catford and her co-presenter Bill Overton were begging listeners to call in with their thoughts on the following: 1. Prince Jackson (son of Michael) going to Stowe - were any of them at school with famous people? 2. Runny vegetables - did anyone else have a potato shaped like Jimmy Hill? 3. Paedophiles - were the social services riddled with them? 4. Richard Bacon, sacked

cocaine-sniffing former *Blue Peter* presenter, about to give his first, exclusive interview to Talk Radio - what did listeners think? And, of course, 5. Diana queen of heart surgeons and bewigged frequenter of chip shops - was she a victim?

MacKenzie said he was pleased with the response to the Bacon interview. Talk Radio was flooded with sympathetic callers berating the Beeb for sacking him. He was also pleased that I liked the breakfast show, but it wasn't quite right yet. If a successful station stands or falls by its breakfast show, a breakfast show does ditto by its presenter. Dan Imus in New York, he

thought, was a great breakfast show presenter. He talked to everyone and, more important, everyone wanted to talk to him. If Clinton was in town he would call Imus on his show. Yes, of course it was important to have scoops, but things didn't work that way any more. The wheel has already been invented. It's personalities that count.

Talking of which, what does Anna Raeburn, Talk Radio's personality queen and last year's Sony Gold Award winner, think of her new boss? She hasn't been asked to do her show topless, by the way. "Thank God we've got a professional in charge at last," she said.

Should docusoaps tell the truth or simply entertain us? By Jane Robins

The lying game

Television documentary makers might be forgiven for thinking that the docusoap must soon fall into decline. Practically every subject seems to have been covered. Shops, ships, vets, doctors, nurses – all have been heavily docusoaped already.

Yet Paul Hamann, the BBC's head of documentaries, recently revealed that he has managed to commission 12 new docusoaps, which will make up nearly half of the corporation's total new documentary output. Clearly, broadcasters' appetite for docusoaps remains as voracious as ever, and they are still generating high ratings.

There is, however, a problem with moving into the next stage of the genre's development. It seems that programmers have still not worked out what the journalistic rules are: they have not decided whether the docusoap must have the same respect for truth as is required of serious documentaries.

The question was discussed with animation and occasional animosity at a recent seminar on "truth in factual programmes", hosted by the BBC, but attracting luminaries from throughout the industry.

The participants fell into two camps, with the first arguing that the docusoap, unlike the serious documentary, is essentially entertainment, and can therefore be more relaxed about what it presents as "truth". Much of the debate focused on a single scene in the BBC's *Driving School* series. Programme-makers had asked its heroine, Maureen, to re-enact her habit of waking up at 4am to demand that her husband test her on the *Highway Code*.

The "entertainment" school argues that such re-enactment is fine. The logic behind the argument says the scene was typical of Maureen's real behaviour, and audiences are sophisticated enough to realise that a television camera crew would not have camped out in her bedroom night after night on the off-chance of her waking up early for one of her *Highway Code* sessions.

A scene from the BBC's popular docusoap *Driving School* raised serious ethical questions

This justification relies heavily on the assertion that audiences know that, to some degree, all of television is a trick. They recognise that vast amounts of raw material are edited into a "version of reality".

The second camp, the "purist" school, says that that once programme-makers start concocting or re-enacting a scene, they are in danger of misleading the audience. Viewers are entitled to believe that what is seen on the screen is real.

So how do audiences judge the "facts" presented in a docusoap? Dr Annette Hill, a media academic, is in the final stages of a research project commissioned by the British Film Institute. Five hundred people were asked to keep diaries over a five-year period, recording their views on reality programming which included the early precursors of the docusoap, such as 999 and *Children's Hospital*.

Although the research does not provide clear answers to the programme-makers' dilemma, it does reveal some relevant themes. Audiences, it seems, are not a homogeneous group that responds to a programme in a given way. So, with the Maureen-in-bed scene, it seems likely that while some viewers were aware of the camera crew, others did not think about it.

Although the research suggests that audiences are sophisticated in recognising the amount of editing that is involved in a programme, it also reveals that most viewers put a high level of trust in the programme-maker. They trust the BBC not to offend. And it is therefore quite possible that they would also trust the BBC not to play fast and loose with the truth.

Steve Hewlett, the new director of programmes at Carlton, and original commissioner of *Children's Hospital*, says that even if audiences recognise what is going on, concocted scenes are damaging to the whole of factual programming.

Audience questioning of the reality of scenes in docusoaps would inevitably spread into their attitude towards more serious documentaries, he argues. The contract between producer and audience that factual programmes are factual would gradually be broken down.

Also, an industry acceptance of contrived scenes in docusoaps would, over time, put serious documentary makers at a disadvantage. They would be put under pressure to produce more exciting scenes more readily, but it takes a much greater investment of time, research and money to produce the authentic "magic moment" than it does to invent one.

The BBC is in the process of updating its guidelines on such issues and currently seems inclined to take the Hewlett view, that tampering with the truth in anything but the margins of television is not acceptable. The Director General, Sir John Birt, appears to be firmly in the "purist" school of factual programming. But the BBC is only one part of the broadcasting market; producers expect that the real test may come at ITV, where the pressure to improve ratings is unrelenting.

Bad BBC news from north of the border

LAST WEEK, the Scottish Daily Record turned its front page into a wild-west "wanted" poster. It demanded the heads of the "BBC hitmen" guilty of "the cold-blooded murder of Scotland's news programme". Underneath were mug-shots of Will Wyatt, head of broadcasting and Tony Hall, director of news and current affairs. When the corporation's recent strategy review called for BBC news to be more "accessible" to popular opinion, I don't think this is quite what they had in mind.

It was the most lurid episode so far in the extraordinary controversy raging in Scotland over the *Str O'Clock News*. In rejecting a Scottish-generated bulletin, the BBC has succeeded in uniting against itself the entire Scottish press, Scottish opposition parties, the Broadcasting Council for Scotland, its own employees and just about every other voice of Scottish opinion.

The most recent poll suggests 61 per cent of Scots support the Scottish six, with 23 per cent opposed. The tabloid shooting war began 10 days ago when the BBC board of governors blocked plans to replace the existing London-based six o'clock news with one presented and edited in Scotland. BBC Scotland had mooted the idea of a "Scottish Six" as a response to the changed political situation in a devolved Scotland.

But BBC governors said this risked "running ahead" of constitutional events, and that they were "minded" to oppose it. The BBC's Scottish "watchdog", the Broadcasting Council for Scotland, was furious. Professor Lindsay Paterson, a prominent member of the BCS, resigned, declaring that the corporation was treating Scotland with contempt. There were claims that the BBC had been "bounced" by lobbying from Cabinet Ministers who feared a "platform for nationalism".



IAIN MACWHIRTER

In fact, the platform for nationalism has been constructed by the BBC itself. It has handed the SNP its best propaganda gift since Sean Connery was denied a knighthood last year. The nationalists have renewed their attack on the "English Broadcasting Corporation" – this time even anti-nationalist papers like the *Record* are agreeing with horrible suspicions of "metropolitan interference".

Yet this is not, essentially, a political issue at all, but a matter of practical journalism and editorial coherence. In six months time, a Scottish parliament will be sitting in Edinburgh with legislative responsibility for a whole range of domestic policy: education, health, local government, sport, crime, the arts etc. This will present the London-based news editor with an insoluble dilemma: do they ignore the new constitutional reality and continue to transmit English stories about these subjects to Scotland, where they no longer apply; or do they try to integrate into the UK bulletins Scottish stories which are not relevant south of the border.

The BBC seems to believe that it is possible to present Scottish-only stories in the existing UK national news. But I fear this is naive. Take a current example: in Scotland there is a row between Scottish Office ministers and the

teachers' unions about the implementation of "Higher Still", a new examination system. Is it really worth trying to explain this complex issue to millions of bemused English viewers who will not be affected? Similarly, Scottish viewers may not be hugely interested in the controversy over the future of grammar schools, abolished in Scotland 30 years ago.

In March 1998, out of 280 news stories broadcast on UK bulletins, only three were Scottish – yet there are two Scottish party conferences in that month.

The sensible solution would be to "devolve" one major news bulletin to Scotland so that Scottish stories can be assigned their due weight. The "Scottish Six" would still have access to the BBC's correspondents. It would merely give Scottish stories the prominence they deserve in Scotland.

The Corporation is only fuelling paranoia about London control freaks trying to starve the parliament of the oxygen of publicity. But it's not too late for the BBC to avoid a collision. Instead of making its decision irrevocable on 10 December, the BBC could launch a proper public consultation. There is a compelling case for a formal inquiry into how broadcasting should adapt to the new constitutional arrangements in the UK.

Diversity is nothing to be afraid of; it is the spirit of the age. The United Kingdom is now a multi-national state and needs a broadcasting service to match. Let nation speak peace unto nation – at least at six o'clock.

Iain MacWhirter is one of eleven BBC Scotland presenters who signed an open letter calling for the BBC board of governors to reconsider their opposition to a Scottish edited and presented six o'clock television news bulletin.

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NEW FILMS

IF ONLY (15)

Director: Maria Ripoll
Starring: Douglas Henshall
Mix *Two Men with Four Weddings and a Funeral*, and you get Maria Ripoll's mainly dreadful Anglo-Spanish comedy. Henshall stars as a dumped boyfriend transported back in time by some mysterious Spanish dustmen. As dopey as it sounds, but a lot less fun. **West End:** ABC Piccadilly, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Mezzanine, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Virgin Fulham Road

THE NEGOTIATOR (15)

Director: F Gary Gray
Starring: Samuel L. Jackson, Kevin Spacey, JT Walsh
Two of modern cinema's current favourites go head to head in Gray's thrilling drama about a negotiator forced to kick up a hostage situation of his own. Originally written for Sylvester Stallone, the script has a predilection for lunk-headed swearing that sounds uneasy in the mouths of such articulate, rhetorical performers, but it doesn't disrupt the wonderfully louché chemistry between them. **West End:** ABC Baker Street, ABC Tottenham Court Road, Hammersmith Virgin, Notting Hill Coronet, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Marble Arch, Screen on the Green, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

OUT OF SIGHT (15)

Director: Stephen Soderbergh
Starring: George Clooney
Elmore Leonard is the source for Stephen Soderbergh's irresistible slice of pulp fiction involving eccentric low-lives, comic cops, intrigues and heists. George Clooney plays the jail-breaking hero, Jack Foley, as a down-and-dirty version of Cary Grant, and turns in the best performance of his career so far. Suddenly, he seems to be a grown-up film star at a time when most of Hollywood's male heartthrobs don't look old enough to get served in a pub. **West End:** Barbican Screen, Clapham Picture House, Elephant & Castle Coronet, Empire Leicester Square, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero

THE PHILADELPHIA STORY (U)

Director: George Cukor
Starring: Katharine Hepburn, Cary Grant, James Stewart
Sublime cinema, Cukor's movie - in which Hepburn's imminent wedding is disrupted by the appearance of her former fiancé (Grant) and a scandal-sheet reporter (Stewart) - has a strange, melancholy heart. You never doubt that it'll be the

one who loves her most who'll lead her to the altar, but between the rounds of screwball hickering, Hepburn's unsatisfied headdress sheds real tears. **West End:** Curzon Soho

SLUMS OF BEVERLY HILLS (15)

Director: Tamara Jenkins
Starring: Alan Arkin
Tamara Jenkins's fictionalised account of her own teenage years in the outskirts of Beverly Hills has many moments that - after *The Ice Storm* and *Boogie Nights* - seem rather overdone. But Jenkins has a sure instinct for crippling social embarrassment, an impeccable sense of comic timing, and a superb central performer in Alan Arkin - a relic of the decade currently enjoying a well-deserved renaissance. **West End:** ABC Shaftesbury Avenue, Clapham Picture House, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, Virgin Fulham Road

T-REX: BACK TO THE CRETACEOUS (3-D) (U)

Director: Brett Leonard
Starring: Peter Horton
I-Max 3-D dinosaurs are the kind of cute sensation for which cinema was invented, and Leonard's simply-scripted effects showcase lets the reptiles roar in your face, swoop over your head, and pursue you through the trees. But while you see every scale of the tyrannosaurus in living colour, you also get a pin-sharp view of Liz Stauber's zits. **West End:** Pepsi IMAX Cinema

VICTORY (15)

Director: Mark Peploe
Starring: Willem Dafoe, Irene Jacob, Sam Neill
This Euro-funded Conrad adaptation takes us to a sleazy hotel in the South Seas where well-known character actors (Simon Callow, Bill Paterson, et al) favour extravagant facial hair, and the mid-price stars (Jacob, Neill, Dafoe) do some safe, literary acting. *Archers* fans should take a look, as one of the hairier patrons is played by Edward Kelsey, better known as the voice of Joe Grundy. **West End:** ABC Pantion Street, Clapham Picture House

THE WISDOM OF CROCODILES (15)

Director: Po Chih Leong
Starring: Jude Law, Elina Lowensohn, Timothy Spall
Jude Law stars as a contemporary vampire in a designer-anorak who has the decency to wine and dine his victims before he goes for their jugular. A well-intentioned attempt to give the genre an adult twist is undone by a script that can't tell the difference between sophistication and pretentious rambling. **West End:** ABC Pantion Street, ABC Shaftesbury Avenue, Clapham Picture House

Matthew Sweet

GENERAL RELEASE

ANGEL SHARKS (MARIE BAIE DES ANGES) (15)

Manuel Pradal's handsome debut feature has seductive surface qualities, and its disjointed scenes of adolescent decadence are engaging. But it's empty, pretentious stuff, a sunny triumph of form over content. **West End:** ABC Swiss Centre

ANTZ (PG)

Nerd icon Woody Allen provides the voice of worker-ant "Z", who breaks out of his totalitarian rut when he falls in with Princess Bala (Sharon Stone). **West End:** ABC Tottenham Court Road, Elephant & Castle Coronet, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Plaza, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero

BLADE (18)

A techno soundtrack bumps and grinds behind this monotonous arcade-game thriller about a New York vampire-killer tackling a power-crazed new bloodsucker. Noise and martial-arts action mask its tiny pedigree. **West End:** Elephant & Castle Coronet, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

DEAD MAN'S CURVE (15)

All the students at this nameless American college are trying to butcher each other, led into temptation by an obscure regulation which awards straight-A grades to room-mates of suicides. Though not as deliciously nasty as the *Scream* films, *Dead Man's Curve* delivers a fine quota of drive-in shocks. **West End:** Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Virgin Trocadero

ELIZABETH (15)

Shekhar Kapur's film is the tale of a female figurehead struggling to gain purchase in a male world. But Kapur neglects the opportunities for fun in a story of independence triumphing over cruelty. **West End:** Odeon Haymarket, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Mezzanine, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Virgin Fulham Road

FEAR AND LOATHING IN LAS VEGAS (18)

Terry Gilliam's adaptation, starring Johnny Depp as Hunter S. Thompson, tilts at Ralph Steadman cartoonery for its tale of a drug-fuelled journalistic assignment. Incident, caricature and lurid 1970s fashions are substituted for plot and character, and the film soon descends into narcotic lunacy. **West End:** ABC Baker Street, Empire Leicester Square, Richmond Filmhouse, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Haymarket

THE FOUNTAINHEAD (PG)

Vidor's melodrama stars Gary Cooper as an architect who takes on an evil corporate boss. Its expressionistic camerawork and cod-Freudian symbolism present a bizarre moral message: that we should celebrate the young entrepreneurs as a Nietzschean superman. **West End:** Curzon Soho

HENRY FOOL (18)

Hal Hartley's fable traces the fate of a piece of erotic verse which springs from the head of a garbage man. The story's subtle twists and turns conjure Hartley's latest into a *tour de force*. **West End:** Curzon Soho, Renoir, Ritzy Cinema

LEFT LUGGAGE (PG)

Krabbe's first stab as a director results in an un-certain soap opera focused on a Hasidic family in 1970s Holland. Fifth as drama, the film comes to

life as a showcase for its high-profile performers plus rising star Laura Fraser. **West End:** ABC Swiss Centre, Curzon Mayfair, Screen on the Hill

LES MISÉRABLES (12)

Bille August turns Victor Hugo's enormous novel into an enormous film and it's as traditional as literary adaptations come these days - earnest, deferential and almost humourless. **West End:** Odeon West End, UCI Whiteleys

MULAN (U)

In Disney's animated feature, a girl disguises herself as a soldier to spare her ailing father from the certain death of combat. This has it all: a proactive heroine, a strong father/daughter relationship, honour, nobility, and, of course, cross-dressing. **West End:** Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Mezzanine, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

MY NAME IS JOE (15)

Ken Loach's solid social-realist drama tells the tale of Joe (Peter Mullan), a recovering alcoholic torn between his old life (drugs, crime) and his new romance with a middle-class health visitor. *My Name is Joe* brilliantly evokes a Britain caught below the poverty line. **West End:** ABC Tottenham Court Road, Chelsea Cinema, Gate Notting Hill, Phoenix Cinema, Rio Cinema, Ritzy Cinema, Virgin Haymarket

RONIN (15)

There's an air of knackered resignation to John Frankenheimer's latest movie about a gang of mercenaries in pursuit of a suitcase. As the leader of the gang, Robert De Niro does his blank-faced, gristle-chewing act. As dull as ditchwater. **West End:** Barbican Screen, Elephant & Castle Coronet, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Leicester Square, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road

ROUNDERS (15)

The main problem with John Dahl's poker-club thriller is the weak hand dealt by its golden-boy star, Matt Damon, who is comprehensively out-acted by almost everyone else. **West End:** Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Ritzy Cinema, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Haymarket, Warner Village West End

SAVING PRIVATE RYAN (15)

In Spielberg's Second World War drama, Captain John Miller (Tom Hanks) is dispatched with his squad on a compassionate mission to find a young private behind enemy lines and return him home to safety. The harsh, devastating battle sequences will be branded on your memory. **West End:** Plaza

THE TRUMAN SHOW (PG)

Peter Weir's new comedy, about a man (played by Jim Carrey) who discovers that his whole existence has been televised, is very funny, due more to the script than its star's presence. **West End:** Gate Notting Hill, Plaza, Virgin Trocadero

VELVET GOLDMINE (18)

Brian Slade (Jonathan Rhys Meyers) is a Bowlesque idol who finds and mentors Curt Wild (Ewan McGregor), a self-destructive US rocker. Their story is unravelled by a journalist (Christian Bale) 10 years after the hoax assassination of Slade. Director Todd Haynes has created a masterpiece. **West End:** Warner Village West End

THE INDEPENDENT RECOMMENDS

THE FIVE BEST FILMS

Insomnia (15)

Remarkable debut by Erik Skjoldbjærg begins with a policeman (Stellan Skarsgård) investigating a sex killing in Norway, but becomes a haunting study in guilt, duplicity and sleeplessness.

Out of Sight (15)

Director Steven Soderbergh's tale of love on opposite sides of the law knocks spots off every previous Elmore Leonard adaptation, and boasts in George Clooney and Jennifer Lopez (above) the swooniest romantic pairing of the cinema year.

Antz (PG)

Computer-animated comedy voiced by a stellar cast stars Woody Allen as a worker ant who becomes an unlikely opponent of the colony's totalitarian regime. Good fun, and Allen's best work in a while.

My Name is Joe (15)

All that one would expect from a Ken Loach film - humour, indignation, emotional sympathy - driven by Peter Mullan's scary, intense performance as a recovering alcoholic.

The Philadelphia Story (U; Curzon Soho, NFT)

As civilised and graceful as any romantic comedy ever made, it also brought together the most loveable of Hollywood trios - Katharine Hepburn, Cary Grant and James Stewart.



ANTHONY QUINN

THE FIVE BEST PLAYS

The Invention of Love

Theatre Royal, Haymarket
Tom Stoppard's witty, heart-breaking fantasia on the twin passions of AE Housman: scholarship and an unavailable heterosexual friend.

Little Malcolm and His Struggle Against the Eunuchs

Hampstead Theatre
Denis Lawson's superbly amusing cast are in no way eclipsed by screen-heartthrob Ewan McGregor, who brings complexity to the central role.

Kafka's Dick Piccadilly Theatre

Spiriting Kafka to suburban England, Alan Bennett's hilarious romp survives some peculiar casting in Peter Hall's revival.

The Seagull

Playhouse
Jude Kelly's new company, headed by Ian McKellen (right) and Claire Higgins, kicks off with this Chekhov classic in a tempting season that includes *The Tempest*.



PAUL TAYLOR

Twelfth Night

Crucible Theatre, Sheffield
Perfectly thought-through production by Michael Grandage evokes an Illyria where storms rage as much within as without.

THE FIVE BEST SHOWS

Louise Bourgeois

Serpentine Gallery
Autobiographical installations from the surrealist sculptress feature a giant mother/spider presiding over images of spinning and weaving, restoration and decay (right). To 10 Jan



Turner Prize Tate Gallery

Hugely popular competitive bash in which four artists show their wares. Chris Ofili, Tacita Dean, Cathy de Monchaux and Sam Taylor-Wood are this year vying for the top spot. To 10 Jan

Bridget Riley Abbott Hall, Kendal

A retrospective on Riley's career from her early Sixties Op Art, moving from rippling monochromes to circles, stripes and diagonals. To 31 Jan

Edward Burne-Jones

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery
The people's Pre-Raphaelite ecotenary exhibition gathers together many favourites such as *King Cophetua* and *The Beggar Maid*. To 17 Jan

Helen Chadwick Ferens Gallery, Hull

The first overview since this influential UK artist's death mid-career in 1996. Lush light-boxes of fruit, flowers and fluids, and the last series, *Unnatural Selection*, showcasing IVF embryos. To 17 Jan

TOM LUBBOCK

CINEMA

WEST END

ABC BAKER STREET (0870-902 0418) @ Baker Street
Curzon Soho (0171-733 2229) @ Curzon Soho
Ritzy Cinema (0171-733 2229) @ Ritzy Cinema

ABC PANTION STREET (0870-902 0404) @ Piccadilly
Curzon Soho (0171-733 2229) @ Curzon Soho
Ritzy Cinema (0171-733 2229) @ Ritzy Cinema

ABC PICCADILLY (0171-733 2229) @ Piccadilly
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Ritzy Cinema (0171-733 2229) @ Ritzy Cinema

ABC SHAFTESBURY AVENUE (0870-902 0402) @ Leicester
Curzon Soho (0171-733 2229) @ Curzon Soho
Ritzy Cinema (0171-733 2229) @ Ritzy Cinema

ABC SWISS CENTRE (0870-902 0403) @ Leicester
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Ritzy Cinema (0171-733 2229) @ Ritzy Cinema

ABC TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD (0870-902 0414) @ Tottenham
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ABC WHITELEYS (0870-902 0415) @ Whiteleys
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(97.6-98.8MHz FM)
6.30 **2000** 9.00 Simon Mayo.
12.00 **Radio 1** 2.00 Mark
Radcliffe. 4.00 Chris Moyles.
5.45 **Newsbeat** 6.00 Dave
Pearce. 6.00 Steve Lamacq - the
Evening Session. 10.00 Digital
Update. 10.30 John Peel. 12.00
The Breakfast. 2.00 Clive War-
ren. 4.00 - 6.30 Scott Mills.

RADIO 2

(88-90.2MHz FM)
6.00 Sarah Kennedy. 7.30 Wake
up to Wogan. 9.30 Ken Bruce.
12.00 John Inverdale. 2.00 Ed
Stewart. 5.05 Johnnie Walker.
7.00 Evelyn Glennie's Classics.
8.00 Nigel Ogden. 9.00 Some
Like It Hot. See *Pick of the Day*.
10.00 Cole Porter: Night and Day.
11.30 Richard Allinson. 12.00
Lynn Parsons. 3.00 - 4.00 Alex
Lester.

RADIO 3

(90.2-92.4MHz FM)
6.00 On Air.
9.00 Masterworks.
10.30 Artist of the Week.
11.00 Sound Stories.
12.00 Composer of the Week:
Mozart.
1.00 The Radio 3 Lunchtime Con-
cert. (R)
2.00 The BBC Orchestras.
4.00 Voices.
4.45 Music Machine.
5.00 In Tune.
5.45 Performance on 3. Live from
the Queen's Hall, Edinburgh, con-
tinuing a season of chamber
recitals.
8.25 The House of Fear. Four in-
terval programmes of readings
from the surrealist works of Leona-
ra Carrington. In these small and
concentrated portions, the oddest
elements from metaphysics, fanta-
sy, daily routine and material life
are simmered together and mis-
chievously served up. 1. The
House of Fear. Reader Eleanor
Bron. 2. The Oval Lady. Reader
Kate Beckinsale.
8.45 Concert, part 2.
Tchaikovsky: Souvenir de Flo-
rence.
9.40 Postscript. Five monologues
about women. 2. 'Avril'. Played by
Frances Barber. An overwrought li-
brarian hopes her life will be trans-
formed by a kickboxer from
Dudley.

PICK OF THE DAY

WHILE BILLY WILDER was
visiting Europe shortly after the
Second World War, his wife asked
him to buy a bidet. He cabled her:
"Unable to obtain bidet. Suggest
handstand in shower." That is a
neat example of the way Wilder
mixed European sophistication
with Hollywood vulgarity, and a
distinct tinge of misanthropy.
Some Like It Wilder (9pm R2)
looks back at his career which

included such classics as *Double
Indemnity*, *Sunset Boulevard*
and *Some Like It Hot*.
Marina Warner scrutinises the
relationship between people
and wine in *These Little
Piggies* (8pm R4). The humble
porter was forced to carry a
hefty symbolic burden all the
way from Homer through to the
Three Little Pigs.
ROBERT HANKS



9.50 BBC Philharmonic. Conduc-
tor Yan Pascal Tortelier, Edward
Burrows (triple), Dutilleul: The
Shadows of Time. Hindemith:
Symphony in E flat.
10.45 Night Waves. Richard Coles
reports from Edinburgh on the
opening of the new Museum of
Scotland. The museum portrays
Scottish history from prehistoric
times - when the earliest peoples
arrived in Scotland in around
8000BC - to the present day. The
need for a museum devoted exclu-
sively to telling the story of Scot-
land was first recognised in the
50s. Since then, ideas about the
nature of museums and their place
in national cultures have under-
gone huge changes, and the new
building opens as Scotland ap-
proaches devolution. Richard
Coles and guests discuss the
place the museum may have in re-
flecting and defining the changing
nature of Scotland.
11.30 Jazz Notes.
12.00 Composer of the Week:
Joaquin (R)
1.00 - 6.00 Through the Night.

RADIO 4
(92.4-94.6MHz FM)
6.00 Today.
9.00 NEWS: The Choice.
9.30 First Night.
9.45 Serial: Barrows Boys.
10.00 NEWS: Woman's Hour.
11.00 NEWS: Nature: The Big
Sleep.
11.30 Wonderland Girls.
12.00 NEWS: You and Yours.
12.57 Weather.

1.00 The World at One.
1.30 Full Orchestra.
2.00 NEWS: The Archers.
2.45 Afternoon Play: Motor Flight.
(R)
3.00 NEWS: The Exchange: 0171
580 4444.
3.30 Songlines. (R)
3.45 The Voice of the Little Man.
4.00 NEWS: A Good Read.
4.30 Shop Talk.
5.00 PM.
5.57 Weather.
6.00 Six O'Clock News.
6.30 Radio Shetland.
7.00 NEWS: The Archers.
7.15 Front Row. Mark Lawson
chairs the nightly arts programme.
7.45 Still Waters. By Ann Marie Di
Mambro and Cally Phillips. Kate's
birthday looms and Charlie has a
proposal. Meanwhile, an encounter
with the mysterious Veska has a
profound effect on Douglas, and
Frankie Callaghan has big plans
for Joanna. With Ann Scott-Jones,
Emma Currie and Liam Brennan.
Director David Jackson Young
(Part 17).
8.00 NEWS: These Little Piggies.
As pigs' health transcends into hu-
mans become increasingly likely
and concerns about meat-eating
grow, Marina Warner traces a cul-
tural history of the relationships
between humans and pigs. She
talks with chefs and surgeons,
agriculturalists, anthropologists
and vegetarians and visits the
Tamworth Two in their thatched
sty. See *Pick of the Day*.
8.40 In Touch. Peter White with

news for visually impaired people.
9.00 NEWS: Case Notes. On
World Aids Day, Graham Easton
asks what a decade of campaign-
ing and research has done to help
people living with HIV and Aids.
9.30 The Choice. Michael Buark
talks to individuals who have made
life-changing choices, taking them
through the whole process, from the
initial dilemma to living with the
consequences.
10.00 The World Tonight.
10.45 Book at Bedtime: Another
World. In Pat Barker's new novel, a
fractious family and a dying soldier
reveal the past's power to haunt
and distort the present. Abridged
by Doreen Estall, read by Robert
Glenister (7/10).
11.00 The Now Show. Comic duo
Steve Punt and Hugh Dennis pre-
sent the sketch and stand-up
show with the regular team of Si-
mon Munnelly, Jane Bussmann,
David Quantick, Nick Romero, Dan
Freedman and Emma Clarke.
11.30 Talking Pictures.
12.00 News.
12.30 The Late Book: A Man in
Full.
12.48 Shipping Forecast.
1.00 As World Service.
5.30 World News.
5.35 Shipping Forecast.
5.40 Inshore Forecast.
5.45 Prayer for the Day.
5.47 - 6.00 Farming Today.

Shipping Forecast. 5.54 - 5.57
Shipping Forecast. 11.30 - 12.00
Today in Parliament. 2.30 - 8.35
Test Match Special.

RADIO 5 LIVE

(693, 90.9kHz MW)
6.00 Breakfast.
8.30 Test Match Special.
9.30 Nicky Campbell.
12.00 The Midday News.
1.00 Ruscoe and Co.
4.00 Drive.
7.00 News Extra.
7.30 The Tuesday Match. Russell
Fuller introduces coverage of all
the night's football, including action
from the Worthington Cup fifth
round.

10.00 Late Night Live. The day's
big stories with Nick Robinson. In-
cluding 10.30 a full sports round-
up, 11.00 News and finance. And
between 11.30 and 10.0 a sharp
and spirited late-night topical dis-
cussion.

1.00 Up All Night.
5.00 - 6.00 Morning Reports.

CLASSIC FM

(100.0-101.9MHz FM)
6.00 Nick Bailey. 8.00 Henry Kel-
ly. 12.00 Requests. 2.00 Concer-
to. 3.00 Jamie Cullum. 6.30
Newsnight. 7.00 Smooth Classics
at Seven. 8.00 Evening Concert.
11.00 Alan Mann. 2.00 Concerto.
3.00 - 6.00 Mark Griffiths.

VIRGIN RADIO

(125, 157, 126.4kHz MW 105.8MHz FM)
6.30 Chris Evans. 9.30 Classic
Countdown with Russ Williams.
1.00 Nick Abbot. 4.00 Harriet
Scott / AM from 6.45 Janey Lee
Grace. 7.30 Janey Lee Grace.
10.00 Mark Forrest. 1.00 James
Merritt. 4.30 - 6.30 Jeremy
Clark.

WORLD SERVICE RADIO

(198kHz LW)
1.00 Newsdesk. 1.30 Discovery.
2.00 Newsday. 2.30 Meridian
(Live). 3.00 World News. 3.05
World Business Report. 3.35
Sports Roundup. 3.50 One Plan-
et. 4.00 - 7.00 The World Today.

TALK RADIO

6.00 Bill Overton and Clare Cat-
ford. 9.00 Scott Chisholm. 12.00
Lorraine Kelly. 2.00 Anna Rea-
burn. 4.00 Peter Dealey. 5.00
The Sports Zone. 8.00-9.00 James
Whale. 12.00 - 6.00 Ian Collins.

SATellite TV AND CABLE

PICK OF THE DAY

TOWARDS THE end of his career,
Laurence Olivier (right) took
some roles whose artistic
quality was open to question.
Not that he minded much. As
he put it: "nothing is beneath me
if it pays well." Quite right, too.
After films such as *Wuthering
Heights*, *Henry V*, *Hamlet* and
The Entertainer, nobody could
really fault his cinematic CV.
That is examined in depth in
tonight's *Hollywood Hall of
Fame* (9.30pm Sky Cinema),

which is followed by his
highly memorable performance
opposite Joan Fontaine in
Alfred Hitchcock's 1940 version
of *Rebecca* (10pm).
Cliff Morgan may be known to
younger generations as the
long-running presenter of
Radio 4's *Sport on 4*, but the
man who is profiled in *Dickie
Davies' Sporting Heroes* (9pm
Sky Sports 3) was also a great
Welsh rugby player in his time.
JAMES RAMPTON



8.00 *Coltrane's Piano and Automobiles*
(20/1/99). 8.30 *Flight* (20/1/99). 9.00
Extreme Machines (19/9/99). 10.00 *Night-
fighters* (18/2/01). 11.00 *Tank: A History of
the Tank at War* (19/9/99). 12.00 *Survival*
(18/3/00). 1.00 *First Flights* (18/3/00).
1.30-2.00 *Ancient Warriors* (18/3/00).
SKY ONE
7.00 *The Simpsons* (18/3/00). 7.30 *The
Chris Evans* (18/3/00). 8.00 *Hollywood
Squares* (18/3/00). 8.30 *Gayle* (20/1/99).
9.00 *Sally Jessy Raphael* (7/7/97). 11.00
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Gayle (20/1/99). 1.00 *Sally Jessy Raphael* (7/7/97).
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Jenny Jones (18/3/00). 3.35 *Special K* (18/3/00).
4.00 *Gayle* (20/1/99). 5.00 *Sally Jessy Raphael* (7/7/97).
5.30 *Opah Winfrey* (18/3/00). 6.00 *Jenny Jones*
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PETER CONCHIE

TELEVISION REVIEW

IF ONE sunny day next

summer, you tell your teenage children that rain and dead are bad, then you are a terrible parent. It is a pity that the adoption agency's back as the usual adoption etiquette is abandoned and a child's history withheld until after the first meeting.

But the film was guilty of manipulation, too. After an hour my heartstrings were being frayed with all that lugubrious, cloying C&W soundtrack was insistent in making its rather obvious points in the musical shorthand so overused in radio features, and the director had an insufferable, if indiscriminate, appetite for visual metaphor.

To make the point that a new kid on the block might struggle to fit in, it was a game of one-up-one with the basketball bouncing off the rim, later at the picnic the ball was hit clean through the hoop. This most successful of these were naturally the least convincing, such as the tender shot of a puppy reaching for his brand new dad from the merry-go-round outside McDonald's.

In *Sound Stories* (BBC2) the focus switched from damaged children to fractured communities in 'Van Irish Requiem'. This charmingly understated film followed a four-day concert tour of Mozart's *Requiem*, with choirs from both sides of the border contributing to elaborate the bleatery of the 1788 Requiem. Happily for the film's makers, this coincided with the conclusion of the Good Friday Peace agreement.

One could imagine it as a choral requiem. If you like - and the director appeared to have something similar in mind. Organisers Terry McCabe and Bernie Lloyd had to borrow thousands of pounds for the tour and would only break even if the concert sold out. Rehearsals were delayed by coffin in church, there was the anticipated pre-concert hum as Tony and Moll sat down at the table with John and David.

With that moral undertone unique to a requiem, it felt that the characters themselves were contributing to the peace process - in a climactic chorus of assent, voices chimed in on either side while long lenses shot of Stormont with politicians clutching were applied in. Thirty minutes flew by like the regulations themselves, the programme had a momentum of its own. And both - for the time being - concluded with a happy ending.

In other words, it's just come on to the market, it's exactly what you're looking for and other people are already interested. They didn't find out until later that Jeffrey had the behavioural equivalent of a late. 'She did tell me that if she was in my shoes, she'd be scared too.' Pauline said later: 'recounting Sessions's call to tell her that the adoption was approved, after an afternoon's counselling of candidates and

cautious. This was typical of the adoption agency's back as the usual adoption etiquette was abandoned and a child's history withheld until after the first meeting.

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BBC1

BBC2

ITV Carlton

Channel 4

Channel 5

6.00 Business Briefing (57:59) **7.00 News** (14:35).

5.00 Killy (S) (17:59:20) **6.40 Sports** (S) (17:57:22) **10.00 City Hospital** (S) (17:53:46) **10.45 News** (S) (17:53:46) **11.00 Good Living** (S) (17:53:46) **11.25 City Cook** (S) (17:53:46) **11.55 News** (S) (17:53:46) **12.00 Weather** (S) (17:53:46) **12.25 Going for a Song** (S) (17:53:46) **12.55 News** (S) (17:53:46) **1.00 Weather** (S) (17:53:46) **1.40 Neighbours** (S) (17:53:46) **2.05 Inside** (S) (17:53:46) **2.30 Wipeout** (S) (17:53:46).

3.25 Children's BBC (S) (17:53:46) **3.45 News** (S) (17:53:46) **4.00 News** (S) (17:53:46) **4.30 News** (S) (17:53:46) **4.55 News** (S) (17:53:46) **5.00 News** (S) (17:53:46) **5.25 News** (S) (17:53:46) **5.50 News** (S) (17:53:46) **6.00 News** (S) (17:53:46) **6.25 News** (S) (17:53:46) **6.50 News** (S) (17:53:46) **7.00 News** (S) (17:53:46) **7.25 News** (S) (17:53:46) **7.50 News** (S) (17:53:46) **8.00 News** (S) (17:53:46) **8.25 News** (S) (17:53:46) **8.50 News** (S) (17:53:46) **9.00 News** (S) (17:53:46) **9.25 News** (S) (17:53:46) **9.50 News** (S) (17:53:46) **10.00 News** (S) (17:53:46) **10.25 News** (S) (17:53:46) **10.50 News** (S) (17:53:46) **11.00 News** (S) (17:53:46) **11.25 News** (S) (17:53:46) **11.50 News** (S) (17:53:46) **12.00 News** (S) (17:53:46) **12.25 News** (S) (17:53:46) **12.50 News** (S) (17:53:46) **1.00 News** (S) (17:53:46) **1.25 News** (S) (17:53:46) **1.50 News** (S) (17:53:46) **2.00 News** (S) (17:53:46) **2.25 News** (S) (17:53:46) 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